

Sight and Sound

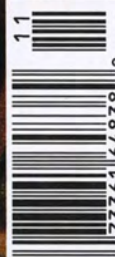
20
PAGES OF
FILM
REVIEWS

Classic cinema: De Sica's 'Bicycle Thieves'
Moscow: New Russian cinema
'Film on Four': a very British tradition

Michael Mann in interview:
from 'Miami Vice' to
'The Last of the Mohicans'
Freddie Francis:
beyond the horror film
Conquistador cinema:
Ridley Scott's '1492'

Daniel Day-Lewis in 'The Last of the Mohicans'

Frontiers



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Ivan Strasburg	Photography	<i>The Cutter (U.K.)</i>
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On the selection of their films for the

36TH LONDON FILM FESTIVAL

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Sight and Sound

KOBAL



Freddie Francis' 'The Elephant Man': 16



'Single White Female': 52



'Unlawful Entry': 54

Features

WARS AND PEACE

Michael Mann gives Gavin Smith a career-length interview, from *Miami Vice* to *The Last of the Mohicans*
Plus John Harkness on Mann, Fenimore Cooper and American myths **10**

GOTHIC SHADOWS

What lies on the other side of horror? Freddie Francis talks with Kevin Jackson **16**

CONQUISTADORS' CINEMA

Peter Wollen on Ridley Scott's *1492*, and Hollywood's myths of the West **20**

COMIC POSITIONS

De Sica's *Bicycle Thieves* may be an acknowledged neo-realist classic, but it manipulates its viewers in complex ways, argues Chris Wagstaff as he looks at two sequences from the film **25**

WRITERS' TELEVISION

Film on Four, ten years old this month, draws on the remarkable traditional strengths of British television drama, argues James Saynor **28**

INTO A NEW WORLD

Four Russian film-makers talk about old Soviet cinema, new genre movies – and the fate of film in Russia **32**

Regulars

EDITORIAL Two cheers **3**

LONDON Michael Eaton on videos and the Amazonians **4**

MOSCOW Verina Glaessner on film amid the ruins **5**

FESTIVALS David Robinson in Venice **6**

OBSESSION Walter Lassally remembers John Ford **8**

BOOKS Film preservation; Fellini; cultural populism; television audiences; horror; Frederick Wiseman **34**

LETTERS Unknown Eastwood; Satyajit Ray **63**

IF... Ben Woolley on real-time graphics **64**

Cover photograph by
Frank Connor

Film reviews

Boomerang	38
Buffy the Vampire Slayer	39
Crying Game, The	40
Danzón	41
1492: Conquest of Paradise	41
Glengarry Glen Ross	43
Husbands and Wives	44
Last of the Mohicans, The	45
League of Their Own, A	46
Mon père, ce héros	47
Montalvo and the Child/ Montalvo et l'enfant	48
Montalvo et l'enfant/ Montalvo and the Child	48
My Father Is Coming	49
Prague	50
Rapid Fire	51
Single White Female	52
Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me	53
Unlawful Entry	54
TELEVISION FILMS	
Black and Blue	55
Disaster at Valdez	56
SHORT FILMS	
Brooch Pin and the Sinful Clasp, The	57
Feet of Song	57
Stain, The	57

Video reviews

Trevor Johnston and
William Green on
this month's video releases **58**

**Next issue on sale
17 November**

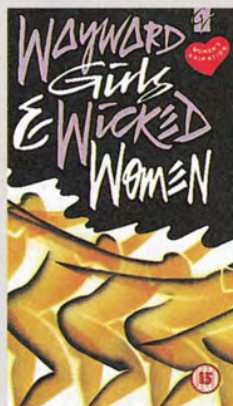


'1492': 41

Connoisseur Video: New Releases

New additions to the Connoisseur collection of animation this month are these three volumes of short films made by women animators.

Wayward Girls and Wicked Women is the collective title for some of the finest contemporary animation. Plus three early short films from Jane Campion, director of *An Angel at my Table* and *Sweetie*.

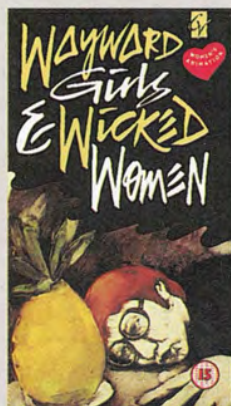


Wayward Girls & Wicked Women Volume 1

Certificate 15/Colour/71 minutes (approx)

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From the brilliant postcard humour of Alison Snowden's *Second Class Mail* to Erica Russell's beautiful African dance (*Feet of Song*) via the almost grotesque *Poodle* of Nina Shorina's 1984 short, this is a fine representation of the breadth and depth of material which women film makers have produced in recent years.

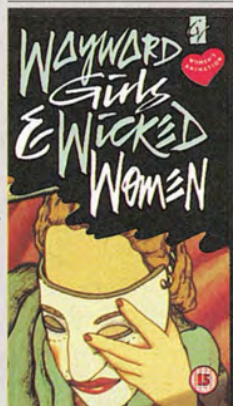


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With a huge range of animation styles, and messages delivered with raucous humour (*Girls Night Out*), dry wit (*Fatty Issues*) or grim menace (*Daddy's Little Piece of Dresden China*) volume two takes us further into the disparate world of women's animation.



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In the third and final volume of the series there is a move away from the short concise work to three films of complexity and wonder. Susan Pitt's *Asparagus* is twenty minutes of dreamtime, concerned with the creative process itself. Joanna Woodward's *Brooch, Pin & the Sinful Clasp* goes deep into the machinations of love and erotica, and the 'women's lot' is analysed with an acerbic eye in Vera Neubauer's *The Decision*.



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In a month when our releases owe their existence to women, it seems apt to offer *The Ascent* to lovers of film and fans of the female film maker alike. This 1976 film, set on the snowy wastes of war-torn Belorussia in 1942, is fitting testament to the life and work of one of the great soviet directors, and one of the very few women in that field, Larisa Shepitko.

The usual mail order price for this is £14.99 plus postage and packing, but *Sight and Sound* readers may order at the special discounted price of £9.99.



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Two cheers

Contributors to this issue

Ben Brewster is assistant director at the Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research
James Donald teaches at the University of Sussex
Michael Eaton's scripts include *Fellow Traveller*
Verina Glaessner wrote the set report on Sally Potter's *Orlando* in the August issue of the magazine
John Harkness is the film critic for the Toronto publication, *Now*
Kevin Jackson is working on a collection of Humphrey Jennings' writings
David Robinson is the author of many books on cinema, the most recent on music and silent film
James Saynor writes regularly on television for *Sight and Sound*
Gavin Smith has published interviews with a number of major directors
Chris Wagstaff teaches Italian at the University of Reading
Peter Wollen is a critic and film-maker. *Raiding the Icebox*, a collection of his essays, will be published shortly by Verso

No one is surprised that Hollywood is releasing *1492: Conquest of Paradise* and *The Last of the Mohicans* in the month when the US is interrogating its own history on the 500th anniversary of Columbus' landing. After all, as Peter Wollen suggests in his article, it has long been taken for granted that American cinema helps to create and sustain notions of American identity, with Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* as only the most obvious example of a film involved in forging an 'imagined community'.

One of the many reasons for our embarrassment and inferiority complex about British cinema is that it has rarely played such a role in our national life. Literature, and more recently television, are the places where arguments over Englishness and Britishness have more often been fought out. Of course, this isn't to say that British cinema hasn't been centrally about national identity – the films of Korda, the Gainsborough films, Ealing and Hammer are all centrally involved with the question. But it's only in special circumstances, for example in the Second World War, that people have expected to find such questions in cinema. Perhaps the last time this happened was in 1982, when the wild success of *Chariots of Fire* and a newly created Channel 4 with its commitment to *Film on Four* seemed to presage a new visibility for a British cinema which stretched from Hugh Hudson's film to *My Beautiful Laundrette* and Black Audio's *Handsworth Songs*, each of which in its different way explicitly re-imagined British identity.

Ten years on, as we all know too well, it didn't quite work out. Goldcrest went off like a firework, too much was expected of *Film on Four*, and Channel 4, under pressure from a Tory administration, found itself out in the market. As a measure of the road Channel 4 has travelled in its ten years, one might note that *Film on Four* was one of its major innovative contributions to television in 1982; in 1992 the same channel has given us *The Big Breakfast*. Yet even if the money and infrastructure were available, are we any longer confident that we know what kind of cinema and television culture we want to encourage and make, in this unheroic moment when most of the myths about the Greatness of Britain have finally been

rumbled and we don't even have a myth like Columbus to argue over?

But before gloom and doom set in, it is worth saying, and this issue of the magazine is a modest testimony to the fact, that British talent is hardly dead and buried. All that has happened is that, like homegrown academic talent, some of it has moved to the US. For example, the two 'invention of America' films covered in this issue have British figures at their centre. *1492* is of course directed by Ridley Scott; and the star of *The Last of the Mohicans* is Daniel Day-Lewis, only one of a number of British actors, including Gary Oldman (star of Coppola's *Dracula*) and Tim Roth (star of Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs*) who are well respected in Hollywood. Also in this issue, we carry an essay on Freddie Francis, whose talents are currently being sustained by Martin Scorsese, for whom Francis is directing his next movie. Add to these Stephen Frears, whose Hollywood movie, *Hero* (written by David Webb Peoples, the screenwriter of *Unforgiven*) will be released in Britain early next year, and you have a sense that indigenous cinematic talent is alive and kicking – but not always in Britain.

This is not necessarily a matter for regret – after all, in the past England has sucked in plenty of people from marginalised cultures (whether Scotland or the Caribbean) to contribute to 'our heritage', in much the same way as the US is now doing. What is important is that these figures are not spurned as 'sell-outs', but recognised here and welcomed back. It is tremendous that Stephen Frears' next project is a 'modest' film for BBC; and it would be marvellous if David Aukin would follow his bold move to commission Richard Stanley to make a *Film on Four* by persuading Freddie Francis to consider one. And why doesn't the BBC offer to collaborate with Ridley Scott rather than simply making an *Omnibus* about him?

It isn't that these initiatives would signal a renaissance of British film-making or some new beginning, for this is not the heroic moment of 1982, never mind 1942. What they would do is show us all that, even if cinema in Britain is not the forger of effective national myth it is in the US, our film-makers are not prophets without honour in their own country.

JERRY ON LINE #1

Peter Lydon – James Sillavan ©



'Jerry, looking at your itinerary for Clinton's visit: kick-off 9.00am Schwarzenegger Memorial Gate, fine. 1st stop Stage 3; police shoot-out, good, then to Stage 5; interracial love scene, perfect. Next up Stage 4: "Blood Sacrifice II-Return to Vietnam". Maybe skip that one Jerry...'

Amazonian videos

Michael Eaton

The heirs of Columbus came relatively late to the Kayapo, who live in the Xingu in Central Brazil. But when they did arrive, they came down, as usual, like a wolf on a fold. Today, their land in the Amazonian rain forest is threatened by loggers, cattle farmers, gold-diggers, and by a government who wants to flood the land to build a dam.

And now they face not only the rapacious afflictions of the 'civilised world', but also the demands of its millennial dreams. Fourth World peoples have become, for many of us in the First World and in a process unwilling by themselves, the focus of our nostalgic yearnings for communality, our fantasies for ecological harmony, and for lost native wisdom.

It's hard to know which of these two burdens will ultimately be more devastating: the burden of our dirty money or the burden of our guilty dreams. But the Kayapo are fighting back, and one of the unlikely weapons which has joined the arrows in their quivers is the video camera.

Leapfrogging into video

At the Royal Anthropological Institute Film Festival, held at the Granada Centre of Ethnographic Film at Manchester University, two of the Kayapo's most proficient video-astes – Mokuka and Tamok – took time off from having their images captured with Sting, Anita Roddick, and Glenda Jackson MP to show an audience of anthropologists and this exiled ex-anthropologist how they are using what even now we continue to refer to as 'the new technology'. From what we saw of it, Kayapo video-making falls into several distinct categories. First, there are works in which the Kayapo enact themselves for the benefit of others – works which document their struggles with the wider Brazilian society, directly political, we might even say 'campaigning' tapes, made not only to be shown to potential supporters in the west (if this term has any sense any more), but also, and most pertinently, to other indigenous film and video producers throughout the American continents, most of whom have had experience of the white man's machines for much longer than the Kayapo. Second, there are political films made to be shown within the community: for example, Mokuka's *Peace Between Chiefs* records an internal dispute (although orchestrated by FUNAI, the Brazilian 'Indian Affairs' agency) in which war-war is averted by jaw-jaw and which was shown, in the interests of tribal democracy, to those who were unable to take a seat at the conference table. There were even 'comedy films', in which the film-makers dramatised white folk coming into their villages, struggling to eat their food and trying to pick off the women before being chased off by local warriors.

And then there were tapes which documented in detail the elaborate ritual activity of the Kayapo – the equivalent, perhaps, of our wedding videos (though, it must be said, for the most part, better framed, edited and recorded). These were 'useful' to

the anthropological audience only to the extent that they could be interpreted by Professor Terry Turner, the Chicago ethnographer who has been so instrumental in providing the Kayapo with video equipment. For a Kayapo audience, they served not only as an *aide-memoire*, a means of making sure that traditions survive and that the actions of participants can be analysed and assessed, but also, like all movies, as an opportunity for narcissistic display. There was one memorable moment when Mokuka himself has to go into his dance and so hands the recorder over to his young nephew, urging the lad to make sure he gets his uncle in frame while he performs on the dance floor.

Two warring impulses struggled for control as I watched these tapes, both of which were expressed by more vocal members of our privileged audience. Surprise at the clarity and artistry of the Kayapo's use of 'our' (pull the other one) technology, the way they'd taken to it so easily, was quickly rejected by me as a response of condescension. Why should the Kayapo have any problems with the process of representation? They're a lot better at it than we are. If we white folk are stupid enough to point a video camera at an offspring or pet crawling across the carpet to send to antipodean relatives at Christmas tide, why should we deny this crassness to the Amazonians?

But beyond this was a genuine concern, perhaps more sophisticated, which finds its aetiology in French film theory of the 70s and which has now finally found its devious way into anthropology departments. This objection to the Kayapo use of video relates to the idea that the photographic image is in and of itself a reflection of and, simultaneously, a determination of a post-Renaissance, western way of seeing and organising reality – that the process of representation is, by its very nature, a colonising project, that it is the simulacrum of, perhaps even the very agency of, our own alienation: we *represent*; other, uncontaminated cultures merely *present*. This came as a surprise to me, as anthropology was, in my day, among the least self-reflexive of academic disciplines. But since I left, it seems, anthropology too has been post-modernised.

Against both these positions was mobilised a rather more concrete argument

'If we white folk are stupid enough to point a video camera at an offspring or pet crawling across the carpet, why should we deny this crassness to the Amazonians?'

that the Kayapo wanted to have the last word in their own self-presentation and that it was a blessing for them that they had been drawn into the modern world late enough to leapfrog literacy and capitalist organisation, both of which did, without question, impose alien ways of thought upon tribal peoples, as they did, without doubt, upon my own ancestors. But has not representation been, for good or ill, the dance of our species since the Upper Paleolithic? Is not the only crisis of representation a crisis of ownership and control?

Village satellites

In the midst of this inter-cultural turmoil, I was left thinking about the fundamental difference, not so much between the written image and the photographic image, as between the film image and the video image. If the Kayapo have leapfrogged into the video age, it is not just literacy they have left behind, but, more crucially, cinema. For cinema is always two technologies: a technology of sound and a technology of image. Either of these by themselves would have been of limited value to the Kayapo.

The Amazonian anthropologist Stephen Hugh-Jones informed me that among South American indigenous peoples generally there is an absolute consonance between sound and vision. When members of the tribe are given a ritual name, they are also given a specific ornament to accompany it; when a man is called upon to address a meeting, he must be wearing the correct decoration and bodily ornamentation. Similarly, in a ritual enactment, it is also important to register exactly who has taken a part. If the Kayapo had been given a wind-up 16mm Rolex with a 32-second shot length, it would have been totally useless to them.

The way the Kayapo are using video seems to present no problems to them. Mokuka and Tamok gave short shrift to any essentialist argument: "Just because I hold a white man's camera", Mokuka asserted, "that doesn't make me a white man. If you were to hold one of our head-dresses, would that make you an Indian?"

The Kayapo villages now have four parabolic satellite dishes with which they monitor the way they are represented on news programmes. The conclusion these proto-Media Studies students had come to, which pained me I must admit, is that while they are daily misrepresented on local Brazilian television, they have come to understand that they have many friends in Europe and North America.

I felt immensely flattered to be privy to the Kayapo's representation of themselves in the presence of themselves. My nightmare is that before too long the Kayapo will be submitting moments from their videos to Jeremy Beadle – when the head-dress of one of their chiefs falls off in the middle of a dance, or when one of their fellows turns to the left when he should have turned to the right.

My nightmare is that the Kayapo will be crushed by the burden of my well-meaning dreams.



Everything for sale

Verina Glaessner

"This room pays my debt to Chekhov, Tchaikovsky and Eisenstein!": the words of Jean-Luc Godard as he presented the newly renovated and Dolby-equipped room to the Moscow Film Museum a few months ago. But Godard may not have settled his debt after all. The Film Museum, the Kinocentre building in which it is housed, and other property elsewhere belonging to the Film-Makers' Union has all been sold – for some 49.5 million roubles, a sum conveniently just under the 50 million rouble limit which would have drawn the attention of the anti-monopoly commission. The union is taking the purchaser, the Kinocentre Action Society, to court.

Naum Kleiman, head of the Film Museum, is a noted film scholar whose work on Eisenstein and for the museum has achieved international recognition. In the shocked tones of a man "living through a thriller", he explained the background to the situation. The Film-Makers' Union was set up under Khrushchev on the model of Stalin's Writers' Union. Its project was the control of film production, and while its expulsions and smear campaigns arguably disrupted the development of both Russian and Soviet cinema, it did, through funding production and a host of non-commercial film activities, allow film culture to function. Much of its non-commercial activity, including the running of the Kinocentre, fell under the umbrella of the All Union Bureau of Film Propaganda, tactfully renamed the Creative and Productive Bureau in 1989.

The Kinocentre Action Society was formed by Leonid Mursa, a former director of Moldova Films, following the collapse of the Soviet Union at a point when the Film-Makers' Union was becoming an ever-looser confederation of bodies and the museum was seeking ways to establish itself as an independent entity. The company was registered with Moscow city council without notifying the union membership, and within two or three days, says Kleiman, their bid was accepted. No one from the union was asked to present evidence of the value of the property, nor were documents concerning its functions and holdings presented. A committee of union members wrote a letter of protest, but a month later formally requested its return – without explanation.

"Our normal course of action would have been to approach the arbitration court, but it flatly refused to become involved. Our sole remaining option is the citizen's court". They now await a hearing.

Eisenstein and dross

Part of the problem is the lack of any legal differentiation between state and public property, coupled with what is known as 'nomenclatura privatisation', whereby parts of the state bureaucracy, and even ministerial departments, have been able to declare themselves private companies. It seems beyond question that a good part of what appears to have been 'sold' was not legally



Opening up the archives: a television series 'Russia: The Missing Years'

available for sale in the first place, for example, the Film Museum's holdings which fall within the Museum Foundation of the Russian Federation, or the union's property in republics now beyond Russian jurisdiction.

In the absence of stringent planning requirements, there is no guarantee that either the buildings or their collections will remain in the public domain. Meanwhile, with union funds requisitioned, Kleiman continues on a month-by-month basis. Last month's programme included a first-ever complete retrospective of the work of Boris Barnet and screenings and seminars on the theme of the father in the work of Pasolini and in Mikhail Chiaureli's *The Vow* (1946).

With a vast influx of images from the west, a key question has become what it means to be Russian, and this entails a battle for popular memory. Kleiman is disappointed by the wave of recent films with historical subjects, which he believes "explain our history as a cheap thriller, with beasts and killers and sympathetic victims". He is likewise saddened by the current re-appraisals of film history: "Eisenstein and Pudovkin are guilty again – this time because they weren't imprisoned." He argues instead for an understanding of the range of films that was made: "the defeats as well as the triumphs".

The negotiation of a new relationship between the state and the arts also preoccupies Armen Medvedev, head of the Russian Film Committee (Roskino), the liberal, publicly accountable organisation that has replaced the repressive and bureaucratic Goskino. A lugubrious Anglophile with a firm belief in the "perfection" of the British system of film classification, he is at present mediating in a prickly case between the French company Parimedia and the Mir Cinema workers' co-operative, who declared themselves the cinema's owners, regularly hire out parts of the building, and have thrown into jeopardy a joint-venture Russian-French agreement. Medvedev is keen that further privatisations, likely to be implemented through public auction, carry some commitment to maintaining current use.

Moscow's cinemas have mostly been filled with action dross and erotica, along with the requisite multiple screenings of *Terminator 2*, *Cocktail* and *Pretty Woman*.

Despite attempts to clamp down on film piracy, Hollywood films are usually screened from outrageously poor prints, shipped in, it is said, from Hong Kong. Some argue that the Hollywood embargo is self-defeating, and to prove the point, Close Up, formerly the state-funded Video Film Corporation, has been buying prints, including *The Lawnmower Man*, for distribution. The company promises a novelty season of "legally acquired films".

Close Up is also working on a series of 50-minute episodes entitled *Russia: The Missing Years* for Carlton Communications. The selling point is access to newly opened archives, but the constraints of working for American educational television have taken their toll – at least in the two episodes devoted to the Civil War. Visual material has been pressed into the service of strictly narrative requirements, losing both the particularities of historical evidence – a photograph of the Women's Brigade on which that in Eisenstein's *October* (1928) is based goes for little – and the individual histories of the families, including those of some of its young producers, whose lives remain so marked by these events.

Russia has always presented either a glorious future (the Communist version) or a glorious past. There is a small list of filmmakers who have produced films that celebrate the everyday and provide clues as to how Russian life was and might be. Mikhail Kalik's *Goodbye, Boys* (*Do Svidaniye, Malchiki*, 1966) and Sergei Bodrov's *Non-professionals* (*Neprofessional*, 1988) and *Freedom is Paradise* (*Ser*, 1989) were marked by a concern for the texture of individual lives; Bodrov's, *I Wanted to See Angels*, about youngsters in present-day Moscow, is in post-production.

Lost in Russia

Television unspools *The Benny Hill Show*, some passable political satire, and, most popular of all, a threadbare Mexican soap opera, *The Rich Cry Too*. But even here the question, of how to remember and how to be, is emerging, somewhere between the nightly inquest into the Communist Party and constitution, and the weekly *Russian Stories* series with its folkloric momentoes of what Russia has lost.

It is a question at the heart of one of this summer's few Russian films – *The Russia We Have Lost* (*Rossiya, kotoruyu My Potervili*) – assembled and narrated by Stanislav Govorukhin using hitherto inaccessible archive material. The film is littered with awkward cuts and irritating oversimplifications, but somewhere among the photographs that deserve to be remembered and deserve a better vehicle through which to remember them, Govorukhin pinpoints the degree to which post-revolutionary Russia habituated its people to backwardness – a backwardness now in danger of being romanticised into national difference. The juxtaposition of shots of a massive new memorial to Lenin with the grinding hardship endured by the people who live around it is not subtle, but it does raise, as the old guard makes another pitch for power, the question of the moment.

'Kleiman is disappointed by the wave of recent films with historical subjects, which he believes "explain our history as a cheap thriller, with beasts and killers and sympathetic victims"'

Young and almost innocent

David Robinson

VENICE 1932

Even though it was not the earliest film festival (there were several in the late 20s), Venice is the oldest still surviving, and was unquestionably the first to establish itself as a truly international event. To celebrate its golden jubilee, the Mostra Internazionale d'Arte Cinematografica (as it is properly called) this year re-created the original programme of 1932 as a special retrospective – no simple matter, for the records as well as the artefacts proved to be ephemeral, and no exact printed programme had survived. For sixty years, it was supposed that Dovzhenko's *Earth* (*Zemlya*, 1930) and Raoul Walsh's *The Yellow Ticket* (1931) were shown, but it is now established that, though advertised, neither film turned up. Nor is there any record of what was in the newsreels shown before each night's programme, apart from a jingoistic item about Italian naval manoeuvres which preceded the screening of *Grand Hotel*.

There is even dispute about whose idea the festival was, and why it happened. The prime mover was certainly Count Giuseppe Volpi di Misurata, who is still commemorated in the name of one of the auditoria. A self-made financier and industrialist, Volpi was one of the most powerful men in Mussolini's Italy, and as Minister of Finance in 1925-26 he had turned around the Italian economy by effecting devaluation and negotiating the reduction of Italy's war debts. As president of Venice's great international art show, the Biennale, and the unofficial last Doge of Venice, his influence was paramount.

The opening speeches on 6 August 1932 spoke grandly of the elevation of this Tenth Muse of Movie to Parnassus. Since 1895, the Biennale had exhibited the best in the plastic arts; the time had now come for films to be shown like pictures or sculpture. The motives may not have been altogether idealistic: the hoteliers of the Venice Lido had been badly hit by the Depression, and some new attraction was needed to bring tourists to the island. Volpi himself was founder and owner of the great hotel chain CIGA, and the first venue for the festival was the terrace of CIGA's Hotel Excelsior. A portable projection booth was set up, and wicker armchairs accommodated a thousand spectators. In case of bad weather, the booth and 750 of the audience could be moved into the hotel ballroom.

Though the film programme was re-created, more or less (Richard Thorpe's 1938 *The Crowd Roars* was shown in mistake for Howard Hawks' 1932 film, of the same title) the atmosphere of those times is hard to imagine. Newspapers wrote lyrically about the royalty and nobility, the clothes and jewels, the beauties and fashion-setters of European café society who swarmed to the Lido. The Committee of Honour included Pirandello, Marconi, Louis Lumière, Will Hays, Jesse Lasky, Adolph Zukor and high dignitaries of the Fascist party. (Sir Oswald Mosley was prominent among the guests.) Among the interminable reports of the

social whirl and beach fashions, the films seem almost incidental. There is no record of who selected the programme or on what criteria. But what a programme – half the films have become classics: *A Nous la Liberté*, *Congress Dances*, *Mädchen in Uniform* (shown in a print with subtitles by Colette), *The Blue Light*, *The Road to Life*, *Frankenstein*, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, and *Grand Hotel*.

Other films have slipped into undeserved obscurity. *The Man I Killed*, the story of a First World War veteran expiating his guilt, proves to be a major film in the Ernst Lubitsch canon. Robert Z. Leonard's *Strange Interlude*, with the characters' inner thoughts over-voiced, has generally been written off as overweening MGM pretension, but turns out to be fascinating, and no doubt far more effective and less dated than the original O'Neill play. Viktor Tourjansky's charming *Hôtel des étudiants* mingles René Clair musical with the fatalism of the old Tsarist cinema. Maurice Tourneur's *Au Nom de la loi* is an avant-lettre film noir. Mario Camerini's *Men Are Such Rascals*, with Vittorio De Sica as juvenile lead, provokes second thoughts about Italian cinema of the 30s.

Even this impressive programme is not wholly representative of the international cinema of 1932. There are no films from the Far East or Latin America; nothing by Renoir, Prévert, Dreyer, Pabst, Lang, Chaplin, Ford, Hitchcock, Ophüls, Sternberg, Cukor, Pudovkin, all at the peak of their

'The time had now come for films to be shown like pictures or sculpture. But the motives may not have been altogether idealistic: the hoteliers of the Venice Lido had been badly hit by the Depression'

careers. Selecting from the years 1930-32, they might have shown *Le Sang d'un poète*, *L'Age d'or*, *Vampyr*, *La Chienne*, *Kameradschaft*, *M. Rich and Strange*, *Die Dreigroschenoper*. Presumably films like *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *Anna Christie*, *Little Caesar*, *The Blue Angel*, *City Lights*, *Frankenstein*, *Public Enemy*, *Scarface*, *City Streets*, *Tabu*, *Marius* had already been distributed commercially. These were rich times.

Astonishment in the face of the 1932 programme is not just nostalgia, or fascination with the past. On the contrary, had *Mädchen in Uniform*, *The Road to Life*, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* or *A Nous la liberté* been in this year's competition, they would have given the 1992 films a good run for their money. The world was, oddly enough, not so different then to now, with universal economic disaster and unresolved and looming political terrors (the Nazis would take over in Germany within months). So why don't they make them like that any more?

There was, of course, still a sense of technical excitement and innovation. Sound films were new enough to be experimental; a couple of the 1932 films – Karel Plicka's *Through Hills and Valleys* from Czechoslovakia and *Quiet Flows the Don* from the USSR – were actually silent, with synchronised musical accompaniments. There was, though, another, deeper quality – a dominant extraversion – running through the films. Although film-makers of the time were quite self-conscious about art, experiment and avant-gardism, a stronger sense of exhibitionism and communication prevailed. However personal, all these films were conceived with a public in mind – a determination to attract and ingratiate, to win the audience. Later generations might damn this principle as commercial and inartistic, but it is what keeps Venice 1932 so much alive. The very least to be said about these films is that none of them is ever boring – a quality not so easily assumed for today's film festivals.

VENICE 1992

The 1992 jury had little choice, and there was no surprise when the Golden Lion went to Zhang Yimou, who won last year's Silver Lion with *Raise the Red Lantern*, for *Qiu Ju Da Guansi* (*The Story of Qiu Ju*; or *Qiu Ju Goes to Court*). Zhang's new film uses a contemporary setting for the first time, but the central figure is again a young woman of fierce will. *Qiu Ju* is a very pregnant peasant whose husband is injured in a squabble with the head man of the village. Her determination to make the old man apologise becomes near-obsession, until the ambivalent denouement. The mountain settings, rich mix of village society, and compelling story-weaving confirm Zhang as the most accessible of the new Chinese directors.

Equally unsurprising was the Special Jury award to Mario Martone's debut film, *Morte di un matematico Napoletano* (*Death of a Neapolitan Mathematician*). Based on a real character, it traces the last days of a suicide, confidently using a complex mosaic structure to investigate this communist scientist's life and ultimate social disillusion.



In the beginning: the 1932 Venice Film Festival poster



A young woman of fierce will: Zhang Yimou's 'The Story of Qiu Ju'



Spanish sex satire: Juan José Bigas Luna's 'Jamon, Jamon'

Claude Sautet's *Un Coeur en hiver* (*A Heart in Winter*) was a popular choice for the Silver Lion. Sautet has had little recognition in his forty years of refined and rather private work. His new film observes the barely stated shifts of feeling between two men and a woman who disturbs their settled working relationship. Sautet's fellow-Silver Lion winners were more surprising – a bawdy Spanish sex satire, *Jamon, Jamon*, by Juan José Bigas Luna; and a heavy-handed metaphor of corrupt totalitarianism, *Hotel de Lux*, by the Romanian, Dan Pita.

Despite its slew of non-official prizes, Sally Potter's *Orlando* was wholly ignored by the jury, which reinforced the snub by declining to award three available prizes for special achievement. The film deserved honour for ambition at least: the attempt to visualise Virginia Woolf's historical fantasy; the adventure of European co-production and filming in St Petersburg and Uzbekistan; the visual splendour contributed by Greenaway's and Jarman's designers and the Russian cinematographer Alexei Rodionov; and clever casting, from Tilda Swinton's *Orlando* (uncompromisingly feminine) to Quentin Crisp's Edith Sitwell-lookalike Queen Elizabeth. But the immortal *Orlando*'s passage through the centuries, changing sex en route, does not progress much beyond an historical pageant, of slight intellectual weight.

Is the overall heterogeneity of the 1992 programme simply a reflection of the tastes of Venice's new director, Gillo Pontecorvo, or does it say something about the nature of contemporary cinema? A few directors were concerned with broad social issues – Bertrand Tavernier's *L.627*, about police techniques for dealing with drug offenders; Juzo Itami hit the Yakuza hard enough in *Minbo no Onna* to earn himself a brutal mugging before its release; Kira Muratova looked obliquely at Russia's social dissolution in her absurdist *The Sentimental Policeman*. But most directors were more concerned with private sentiments. Neil Jordan's *The Crying Game* (out of competition since he was on the jury) passes from IRA kidnap thriller to a reconsideration of sentimental and sexual norms. Agnieszka Holland's *Olivier Olivier* also submits human relationships to fresh scrutiny, with a story of a child who is lost and a youth who arrives, six years later, maybe or maybe not the lost one. Pupi Avati's second and disappointing American-based film, *Fratelli and Sorelle*, looks at the structural collapse of a family which impetuously emigrated to the United States.

British cinema, never quite so moribund as rumoured, achieved its small successes, apart from *Orlando*. Beeban Kidron's endearing BBC film *Antonia and Jane* relates the shifting relationship of two best-friends-who-hate-each-other. Vadim Jean and Gary Sinyor's unassuming comedy about a nice Jewish boy who gets into the pork business, *Leon the Pig Farmer*, shared the International Critics Prize with Sautet. Sharing seems the film's fate: at the Edinburgh Festival it took half the Chaplin New Director Award, with Bill Anderson's *Creatures of Light*.

Ford fever

It all started with Lindsay Anderson, whom I first met in 1948. I was an aspiring young camera assistant working my way up in the industry, and in pursuit of my ambition to light features, I had founded, together with Derek York, a 'semi-professional' film unit to produce an ambitious film, eventually left unfinished, called *Saturday Night*, with Bryan Forbes as its star. The magazine *Sequence*, which Lindsay co-edited at the time, gave us some publicity, and in return we travelled round the various studios trying to sell the magazine to somewhat unresponsive film technicians.

Lindsay infected Derek, myself and several other members of the *Saturday Night* team with John Ford fever. I still recall his astute evaluation in *Sequence of They Were Expendable*: "runs the risk of being unpopular with the many for not being like *To the Shores of Tripoli*, and dismissed by the few, for being like *To the Shores of Tripoli* (and not like *The Naked and The Dead*)". And then there was the soul-searching caused an issue later when Lindsay changed his mind about *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*: "Now let me thrust my right hand – the hand that wrote that review – into the fire!" (*Sequence* 12, Autumn 1950). Of course, we went to see all the John Ford movies at every opportunity and defended him violently and rather blindly against the heretical attacks of the opposition, represented by Ian Cameron and the magazine *Movie*.

In those days, when videocassettes were still in the realm of science fiction and owning a print of a favourite movie was a privilege reserved for the very rich, we managed to find an ingenious way of putting our John Ford fever into practice. We found a sympathetic owner of a small viewing and recording theatre in a basement on Soho Square, and every time a John Ford movie came within our grasp – usually through the NFT – we would borrow the print for a few hours and have carefully pre-selected sections of soundtrack transferred to 1-inch tape, then also in its infancy. This master-tape was then transferred to disc, one for each member of the fan club – I think they numbered half-a-dozen or so – the whole enterprise being paid for by a small subscription.

Most of the extracts we managed to capture in this way centred on pieces of music – the 'Battle Hymn of the Republic' and recurring revivalist hymns like 'Bringing in the Sheaves' – but they also included short dialogue sequences, such as Captain Brittles' funeral oration for the veteran confederate soldier from *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*: "I commend to your keeping, Sir, the soul of Brome Clay, Brigadier-General, Confederate States Army, known to his comrades here, Sir, as Trooper John Smith, United States Cavalry – a gallant soldier, and a Christian gentleman!"

Or there was the old homesteader's speech for the dedication of the 'First Church of Tombstone' in *My Darling Clementine*: "I hereby declare the First Church of Tombstone, which ain't got no name yet, and no preacher neither, officially dedicated. Now I ain't no preacher, but I've read

Cinematographer Walter Lassally, whose credits include 'Tom Jones' and 'The Bostonians', remembers his passion for John Ford and the snatches of soundtrack he recorded and kept

the good book from cover to cover and back again and I nary found a word agin' dancin' – so we'll begin by having a dad-blasted good dance!"

There were also some choice bits of humour, such as this one from *Tobacco Road*, when Sister Betty Rice drags the young Dude into the Judge's office to get married:

"Who're you goin' to marry, Sister Rice?"

"That's him!" (pointing to Dude)

"You ain't goin' to marry him, are you – why that kid's hardly grown!"

"He's willin'!"

"How old are you?"

"I don't have to tell you that, do I?"

"Can't give you a licence if you won't state your age".

"Well, I was 38 not so long back".

"How long back?"

"Well, I'm 39 now, but I don't show it!"

"How's that kid goin' to support you?"

"The Lord'll provide!"

"Well, that ain't goin' to be soon, 'cause you ain't goin' to get married through this office!"

"Now don't you try and stop us, or I'll start a service right here and now!" (Sister Rice produces a harmonica.) "Sowin' in the morning, dude boy!"

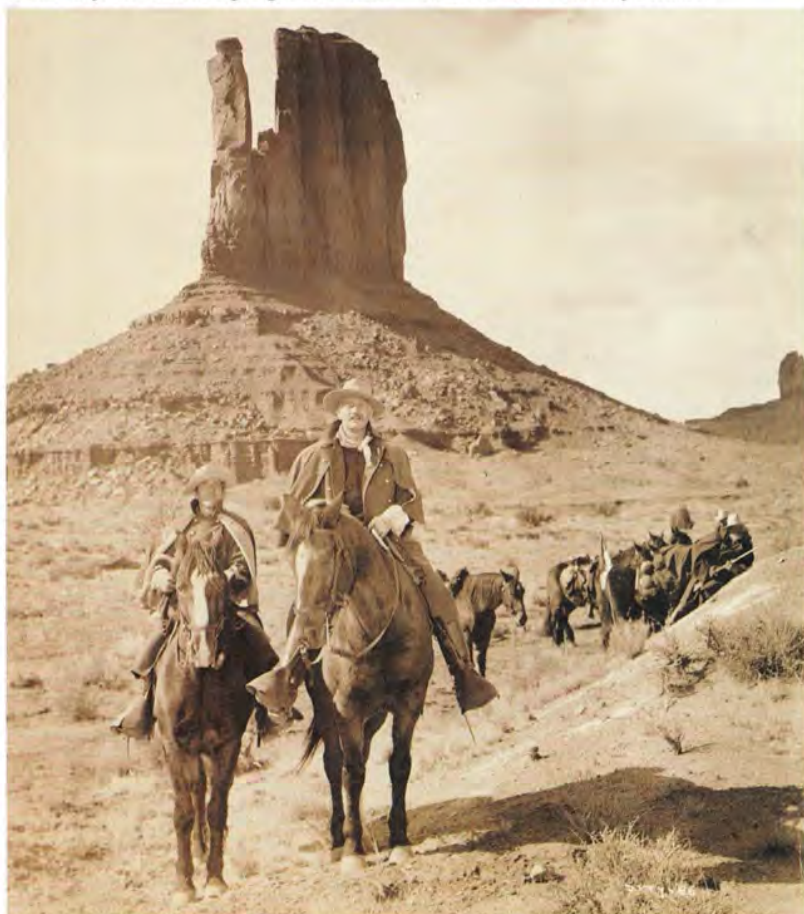
Pandemonium then breaks out, but eventually everyone in the office joins in to sing 'Sowin' in the morning'.

The snatches of dialogue preserved in these discs stick in my mind so vividly that I can recite most of them near word-perfect to this day. The mastertapes got lost when

John Fletcher, who masterminded this operation, moved house, but the discs are still in my possession, although it is some time since our last machine capable of playing at 78rpm was scrapped. I now have all these movies on cassette, but for many years the discs sufficed to conjure up the familiar images they accompanied and were the only means of indulging every now and then in a bit of nostalgic reminiscence.

As to my admiration for John Ford, it has stood the test of time, despite all the allegations of jingoism. I still admire his celebration of loyalty and old-fashioned values and I think he always portrayed the Indians with dignity. I owe a lot to the Old Man, and in *Ballad of the Sad Café*, which I filmed recently in Texas, I was grateful for the opportunity to fashion some images which pay homage to his magnificent visual sense.

An intriguing footnote: when I recorded *The Sun Shines Bright* from a television transmission, I discovered that a short bit of dialogue that I remembered fondly from the discs seemed to be missing. Judge Priest, who is campaigning for re-election, discovers that the woman he is conversing with is not one of his constituents. He remarks: "Covington – fine town, not in my judicial district!" The missing piece is less than a minute long, but leads one to wonder what unseen hand, on what occasion, saw fit to remove it – and how many others like it. Two documentaries on John Ford and an accompanying series of films will be screened on BBC1 and BBC2 in early December



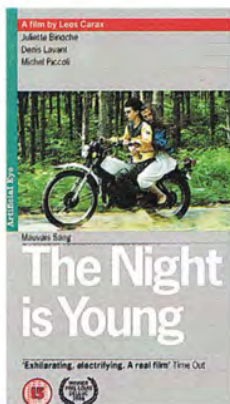
Touchstones in the valley: John Wayne in Ford's 'She Wore a Yellow Ribbon'

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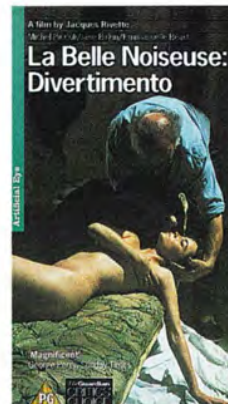
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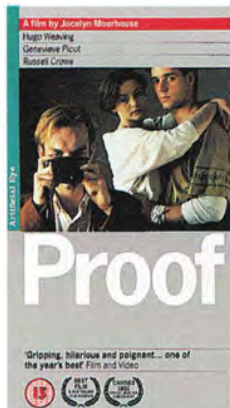
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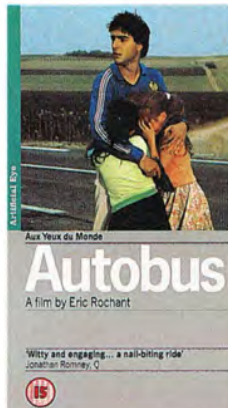
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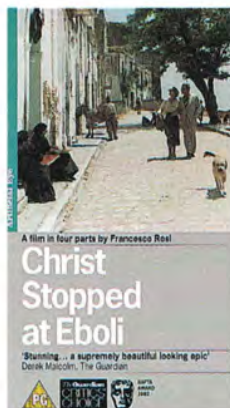
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Beginning with 'The Last of the Mohicans', Michael Mann talks to Gavin Smith about a career that includes 'Manhunter' and 'Miami Vice'

Gavin Smith: Do you see Hawkeye in the same terms as the protagonists of your earlier films, 'Thief' or 'Manhunter' – as someone who, due to his special abilities, is coerced into serving an order that is at odds with his own personal code?

Michael Mann: Yes, except that I wouldn't call Hawkeye's code personal: it's simply the value system and mores of a culture he more or less grew up in, which is Mahican (sic). We don't know much about Mahican child-raising; we know a lot more about the Iroquois, their neighbours, so I borrowed freely from them. In coming up with who is Hawkeye? how does he walk, talk? how does he feel?, we had to have a basis: what was he born into? what was his childhood like? So we started with a background, based on anthropological work, which was primarily a mixture of Mohawk and Mahican, complicated by the degree of acculturation they would have had.

How did this kind of anthropology come into play in the story?

It comes up in how Daniel Day-Lewis plays Hawkeye – this man from another planet who Cora meets and with whom she falls desperately in love. Hawkeye is a wilderness frontier hunter and trapper and he lives in a physical world in which he sees everything, everything has meaning and he is constantly searching for meaning. That makes him a very direct person to be dealing with, so, for example, when Cora says to him, "What are you looking at, sir?", the mode of courtship and his wilderness identity makes him look her in the face and say, "I'm looking at you, miss".

In this respect, Hawkeye's relationship to Cora is the same as Frank's to Jessie in 'Thief'. Frank too is a man from another planet, if you like.

Maybe, but there are a lot of other people from Hawkeye's planet around, whereas there's nobody else from Frank's planet.

What is 'The Last of the Mohicans' about, from your point of view?

I wanted to have the scale of a geopolitical conflict – the ethnic and religious conflicts, the struggle of white imperialism on a grassroots level, the conditions of the struggle for survival of the colonial population, and the struggle between the Euramerican and European powers and the American Indian population. That's the outer frame, that's the scale of the piece. Then at the same time, I wanted an emotional intensity that came from the stories of Hawkeye, his father and brother, from each of their points of view, and from the Munro daughters and the obvious central love story, which I wanted to be very intimate. It occurred to me fairly early on that if you worked hard enough and were smart enough and didn't make too many mistakes, you could get the large picture, but that the trick was to get it there and have immediate emotional intensity; the trick

to having it feel real was going to be that emotional connection.

What did you hope to achieve in the film visually?

I was influenced by Beirstadt's landscape painting, in terms both of compositions and of what the place looked like. Before I got involved I thought his paintings were romantic, fanciful Hudson valley landscapes, that forests don't look like this. But then I realised that they did look like this, they just don't look like this anymore.

Colour has always been a key issue for you. What concerns did you have in this respect, aside from what was dictated by the locations?

Objective reality outstripped me, and I brought it back to a more conservative palette. If you were an American Indian and grew up in the forest, so all you saw were brown and green, and then some Dutch or Swedish traders showed up with reflective objects or the colour red, you'd go for it in a big way. The indications we have from paintings is of a level of expression among the American Indians that was radical and more chromatic, more outlandish than anything I had. They would go into battle naked, with brilliant colours, the heads of birds, on their penises.

I didn't approach this movie the way I approached *Thief*, where I was so excited by the world Frank lives in and the way he sees his world that I made the physical world of the film appear as though it is perceived through Frank's brain. I didn't want the audience to say, "Oh I get it, I'm seeing the world the way Frank sees the world", but I did want them to feel about things the way Frank does. *Thief* was metallic, I wanted metallic colours, cyan, yellows, magentas, not reds or greens, I wanted a lot of reflection and I wanted you to feel it like a three-dimensional machine, with Frank like a rat who sees the tunnels, sees how to move efficiently through the machine of the city, to get where he wants. With *The Last of the Mohicans*, I didn't want to change the perception of the wilderness forest from how we perceive it; I just wanted it to be the way it was, because the way it was is different from what we think.

How did the environment affect the style?

It was terribly inspirational – and it was fleeting. Cities don't change: if I want to shoot a street at night it's going to look more or less the same from the moment it gets dark. In the forest, by the time you get set up to shoot something you've seen, it's gone. The light has shifted, the wind has shifted, the magic has vanished. I was getting inspired by things that were so transient I couldn't follow them.

There are a number of instances in the forest where you composed in depth, on several visual layers.

I liked that. I was always looking for depth; I wanted to capture the sense of the forest as a system which Hawkeye reads and operates within. It's not alien to him, he doesn't have to survive it, he is it. Daniel and I did a training regime that resulted in that conceptual re-orientation, as well as picking up all the physical skills and, equally important, the attitude that the physical skills generate.

What was intended by the opening shot of the landscape in mist, which you go back to for the closing image?

MICHAEL MANN WARS AND PEACE



Epic intensities: Daniel Day-Lewis and Madeleine Stowe in one of the intimate moments of 'The Last of the Mohicans', above; Hawkeye (Day-Lewis), caught between cultures, opposite top; the landscape of war, opposite bottom





◀ The movie begins inside a valley in the forest, 200 feet below the tops of the trees. I wanted you to feel that you were falling into one of those hollows, to drop into it as if you were dropped into a wilderness forest. By the end of the movie, for the first time we're high up in the mountains, we see huge vistas, the whole of this future country is in front of you. So Alice's cliff-dive suicide at the end became a structural movement for me in the picture, to have the final conflicts played out on high ground against the vastness of it all.

You achieve a tremendous level of tension with that single, long-lens slow-motion close-up of Alice on the cliff edge. It's extremely drawn out compared to George Seitz's 1936 version.

What do you think is going on with Alice right then? She's neither girl nor woman, she's in that vulnerable twilight zone between two states of being. She has been shocked by being thrown into all this human butchery and she's obviously suffered what, in the twentieth century, we'd call some form of psychological disfunction. Then all of a sudden it's as if the world clears up for her – and this is my and actor Jodhi May's understanding of what happens – suddenly she's there, immediate in the present with all her faculties, a woman who is completely sane, completely tuned in, understands everything that's happening – and prefers the comfort of nothing as a rational choice to living any more in this vale of pain. She measures Magua and rejects him; he gestures to her and Uncas' blood is still wet on his hand. It was everything I could do to keep my eye on the actors – fuck this is great!

Your films succeed in hijacking the viewer's nervous system so completely that it becomes, at least for me, emotionally overwhelming at a certain point.

That's why style is such an issue.

It's not style. You're getting at the reason why I love making pictures – it's the intensity of the experience, the power of film to make you dream, to take over your nervous system and sweep you away. It's because I love being swept away and I love the power of this medium to do that, intellectually and emotionally. But it only works when what things mean and the way they feel are all operating in total harmony. Style just gets you seven minutes of attention, that's it.

To go back to 'Manhunter', why did you go with such a science-fiction, futurist look?

My strategy for the narrative started from the horror of these crimes as they really are, as they look, what is really done to these people. It's not something I wanted to show in a realistic way – you'd just drive the audience out of the theatre and into the lavatory, where they'd puke their guts out. I wanted to understand it intellectually, to feel it emotionally, without having seen it; I had to find a way to express the psychopathology of that world within the film's form in any way I could, other than by showing the act itself. For instance, by shooting in what was basically an art gallery, exaggerating the security and isolation within which a Lecktor is held – the whiteness of that institution, the pristine hygiene – I could make a contrast with his behaviour, which is absolutely relaxed and natural. I had a guy who was going to behave as if this were pillow talk, leaning back on his bunk with his feet up and his comfortable socks on, talking on the phone to his pal Graham. The pillow talk, contrasted with the sterility and inanimateness of the environment, make him dangerous.

How did you approach things on a visual level with the climax of 'Manhunter' in Dollarhyde's house?

It's a multiplicity of things; one is that there are no right angles, which is a classical, rational form, in the house we built for his place. The house was influenced by William Lescaze, who was part of that futurist, late-40s romantic and abstract architectural movement, and it's all planes that intersect oddly, the rooms aren't square, even the windows are inset at an angle. Romanticism is irrational; the fantasy element would have operated in Dollarhyde's psyche, so if I want to evoke who he is, what his brain feels like, then I want it to be in every object in his environment. Why? Because he selected these objects. That's what I tell the actor. I'm using expressionism to evoke a greater sense of the character.

One thing that happens if there's not a right angle in the whole place is that no matter where you light it from, everything's diagonals, acute angles that intersect in a weird way – it's an insane environment and it affects the audience, though not in any observable way. When Dollarhyde's body lies on the ground, if

you look at the lines of the shadows, they are all soaring forms.

Did you intend for the pool of blood spreading out from under Dollarhyde's body to evoke the wings of a dragon?

No, though when it took that form I moved him around and used it for that, so yes. What I really wanted was to make the horror of that kind of death powerful. Blood has two colours, depending on whether it's venal or arterial: you see that on a crime-scene photo – and you see other fluids as well, like bile.

Why did you choose the song 'In-A-Gadda-Da-Vidda'?

'In-A-Gadda-Da-Vidda' is 'In the Garden of Eden' – that's what it means, but it's so stoned and mumbled. Working-class kids of the late 60s believed the cultural revolution, which was a bourgeois event. They believed it, did a lot of drugs, and thought some form of deliverance was theirs. 'In-A-Gadda-Da-Vidda' was their anthem – but there was nothing there. Dollarhyde is based on a man named Dennis Wayne Wallace of Paramount, California, who was known as the Acid Bath Killer, and who I spent a lot of time researching from 1973 on. Being a serial killer in Paramount, California is maybe a successful adaptation to the environment – it's such a grim, mindfuck of a place. *What was the point of the business with the question of survival of the hatching turtles at the beginning and end of the film?*

If I were doing the movie again, I wouldn't have the turtles in it... To take fascism as a metaphor for evil, you can portray fascism in a much easier way than you can portray the forces that array themselves against it. It's very easy to portray it; analysing it is much more difficult. The acts of Dollarhyde are unarguably evil, yet Dollarhyde was created. What has happened to him? What is the forceful ego that drives him to compensate for a self-esteem that is lower than anybody can imagine? That compels him to construct fantasies in which he is accepted in the most mundane of ways? I mean, what's the movie about? Dollarhyde needs a date. That's the movie. But I also felt that, via Harris' novel, I could perhaps construct a thesis about the preservation of life as the opposite of the psychopathology we describe as evil. But the turtles – I would now take them out.

Was that what drew you to 'The Keep' in 1983?

I was interested in fascisms as a political manifestation of an ethical equation. To me, psychopathology and romance manifested on a political level equals fascism. It's the disease of the twentieth century. Its sick appeal is best understood within a horrific, dark fairy tale.

Did you see it as a kind of Second World War

'The Tempest' with McKellen's character as a kind of Prospero?

No, what I had in mind was Faust.

Do you come from a German background?

Maybe way back. My family all comes from the Ukraine; I was born in 1943 and was raised in the Humboldt Park area of Chicago, which is a working-class area of the city.

Where did you study?

I did English at the University of Wisconsin in the early 60s and then went to the London International Film School. At the time there were five film schools in the US, and then ►

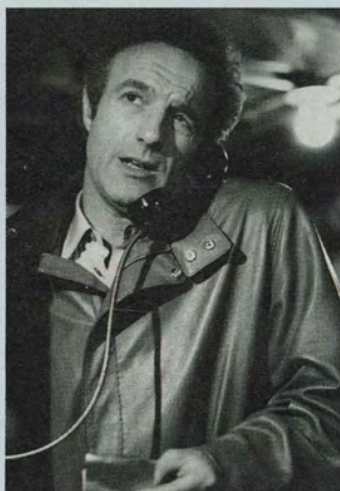
MAJOR MANN

Thief/Violent Streets (1981)

Frank (James Caan) is a professional criminal who is also the epitome of capitalist specialisation. His chosen expertise is the theft of precious stones, which requires an artisan's skill, with complex tools, and involves a high degree of risk, with correspondingly high rewards. Frank would be a romantic loner in the great tradition of criminal outsiders, but crime – like any capitalist undertaking – is a system, and Frank has his place in it. He has an edgy relationship with Leo (Robert Prosky), who runs the organisation that fences Frank's goods, and who persuades him that he would be better off joining the organisation and letting it set up his 'scores'. Frank has his professional ethics – he won't do "home invasions" – and having spent eleven years in jail, he has a list of things he wants to catch up on. He is currently trying to set up home with Jessie (Tuesday Weld), but child-adoption agencies aren't impressed by his background, so paternal Leo has to take care of that problem too. When the system starts taking care of too much on his behalf, Frank is forced to make an existential choice, to reject the family option and face up to the destiny of all romantic loners.

Manhunter (1986)

If *Thief* is a crime film that is really about economic systems, then *Manhunter* is a crime film that is really about the life of the mind. Will Graham (William Peterson) is a forensic investigator who has retired from the FBI to live by the sea with his wife (Kim Greist) and young son. Will's specialist talent – his ability to track



Crime and punishment: James Caan as one of Mann's romantic loners in 'Thief'

down psychopathic killers by entering into their thinking, and inevitably sharing their impulses – led to his breakdown and near-destruction when he caught his last subject, Dr Hannibal Lecktor (Brian Cox). He is called out of retirement by two grisly cases of mass murder – the slaughter of two entire families, which occurred at full moon and involved the victims being arranged in a bizarre tableau, a 'family scene' in which they became dead witnesses to their killer's demonic need. In order to pick up the mindset of the man he is after, Graham subjects himself to another interview with Lecktor, then pursues his quarry, via home movies of the dead families, to a film-processing lab, a centre for seeing and knowing. What should be a film noir tale of cop and killer pursuing each other

through the labyrinth of the mind becomes instead a medical-evolutionary odyssey. How can a man get back in touch with the homicidal instincts of his 'reptile brain' and still emerge on the side of the angels?

The Last of the Mohicans (1992)

1757, in the wilderness of the Adirondack mountains in the colony of New York. Hawkeye, the orphaned survivor of massacred white settlers, has been brought up by the Mohican Chingachgook, with Chingachgook's own son, Uncas. The colonialists, somewhat reluctantly, are being recruited as militia by the British army, who are fighting the French and their allies among the Huron and Ottawa tribes. Hawkeye and his adoptive father and brother come to the rescue of an English party who have been betrayed by their Mohawk scout, Magua. Major Duncan Heyward is escorting Cora and Alice to their father, Colonel Edmund Munro, the commander of a fort under siege by the French. Hawkeye and Cora are drawn to each other, while Uncas and Alice are also attracted. Munro negotiates a withdrawal with the French General Montcalm, but the party is attacked again by Magua and the Hurons. Alice, Cora and Heyward are captured; Heyward offers himself as a sacrifice to save Cora – who has consistently resisted his overtures – and Alice is given as a bride to Magua. Uncas dies attempting to rescue her, and Alice throws herself to her death after him. Magua and his men are finally defeated by Hawkeye and Chingachgook.



Imagining the worst: William Peterson as a forensic investigator who conjures up in himself the mind of a murderer – to stop murder happening

RONALD GRANT (2)

Lighting the past: one of the sequences from 'The Last of the Mohicans', drawing on painterly traditions



◀ there was the Cinematheque, the Prague School and the London Film School. I thought I knew what I wanted to make films about, but I didn't know anything about how you make movies, how to compose a frame, how sound gets on film or any of that stuff. In London there was a heavy emphasis on the craft and technology of film-making, which is exactly what I wanted. I also liked the more artistic, as opposed to vocational, approach to cinema.

Were there any teachers in particular who were important to you?

Among others, Keith Allams, an Anglo-Indian cameraman who was teaching photography. I was there in the late 60s, at about the same time as Franc Roddam and Gavin MacFadyen and David Hart, a lot of guys who went on to work on *World in Action*. I stayed in London until 1971; for political reasons I couldn't go back to the States.

Do you mean Vietnam?

Right. I tried to make films, but at the time film production was so tough to get into and there was so little of it – it took me a year to get a job doing a commercial for Buffalo doormats for £900 – it was a 10-second spot. From there I started a little company making television commercials and documentaries and I wound up making commercials in Europe and then we opened up an office in Chicago. We made some documentaries, including something on Paris during May and June of 1968. We had a few connections and all the leftists wouldn't talk to the American networks, so the networks were forced to deal with people like us.

You did a short film at this time, 'Jaunpuri'.

It was completely abstract and was very much influenced by Indian music. We won an award at the Melbourne Film Festival and some kind of jury prize at Cannes. It was about ten minutes and used a mourning raga. Absolutely rooted in the culture of the late 60s.

What would its place be in your work as a whole?

Probably its proper place would be in the great category called 'Embarrassment'.

What other documentary work did you do?

The most significant one, *17 Days Down the Line* was made when I came back to the US. Basically, it was a road trip from Chicago to LA in which we ran into everything from members of Weatherman, on the run from the FBI

because of Days of Rage in Chicago, hiding out in communes in Taos, New Mexico, to a full-blown riot we walked into in the middle of Albuquerque, to quadriplegic Vietnam veterans in a VA hospital. It was what was happening on the road in the US in 1970.

How did you come to write for television?

I started to write a screenplay. I wanted to direct a feature film, and the only way to get a break was to have a screenplay that someone would want to make and then if they wanted to make it, I would have to be the director. So I had to learn how to write, and in the process, my writing came to the attention of a story editor on *Starsky and Hutch*, which was just starting up. So I wound up writing three or four of the first episodes. That was 1975. Then I went to what was considered the Rolls Royce of television writing at the time, a show called *Police Story*, which was run by a playwright called Liam O'Brien, a terrific Irish intellectual.

He ended up working on 'Vice' with you.

That's right. It was a classy show, Joe Wambaugh was involved with it. Each story was based on a real event and you had the policeman whose story it was working with you. I learned a lot about writing and about working with real guys.

Are there any episodes you'd single out?

There's one called 'Thanksgiving' which was the first guest-star role James Woods ever had, and another called 'River of Promises', which was about migrant workers. This was in 1976, and people weren't dealing with issues like that at the time. I took a cop and made him undercover as a migrant worker. Through what happens to him in LA – getting ripped off in sweatshops, working in restaurants on La Cienega Boulevard – it exposed the exploitation of migrant workers.

Did this kind of writing enable you to go out and do research?

Absolutely. We'd go to sweatshops, hang out with the folks this was happening to, the people who were politically involved in these issues, the cops who were dealing with it. So very early on there was a continuation of my inclination towards events and people. Investigative journalism has always been very attractive to me.

Was 'Police Story' where you first met Chuck

Adamson and Dennis Farina, the writer/director and star of 'Crime Story' in the late 80s?

No, not at all, these are guys I knew from Chicago. I knew Chuck Adamson through a mutual friend in the early 70s, when he was Head of Investigation for the Sheriff of Clark County, which was the municipal authority of Las Vegas. I wanted to do something on a high-line thief, and Chuck introduced me to John Santucci, upon whom half of *Thief* is based. When I was shooting *Thief*, one of the working detectives I gave a small part to was Dennis Farina, who was a detective in Chicago all the way through *Manhunter*. At nights he was over at the Steppenwolf Theater working with John Malkovich.

How did you come to create the series 'Vegas'?

I had an idea for a story I wanted to do about a private detective in Las Vegas. Coincidentally, I was approached by Aaron Spelling, who asked if I wanted to write a pilot about something. So I wrote the pilot teleplay that became the show *Vegas*, but I didn't like how it was produced, so I didn't have anything more to do with it. The character I had was more of an existential loner, and my vision of *Vegas* was as a tougher *Twilight Zone*, a place in which anything can happen – in a way it's more how *Miami Vice* was in its better episodes, and *Crime Story*. But instead it got turned into disco, with white patent-leather shoes and people running around in jump suits. So I let the people at ABC know that I wouldn't write any more unless I could direct it, and from that came *The Jericho Mile* in 1979.

How did 'The Jericho Mile' come about?

There was an earlier teleplay written by Patrick J. Nolan. The basic idea was there, but I didn't care for it; it was very grim and grey. So I took it and rewrote it, and then the Writers Guild gave us a co-writing credit. For me, it's about the resilience and toughness of the human spirit, how intelligence operates in everybody.

What was the response of the prison inmates?

They liked it a lot – it was one of the reviews I most appreciated, when the word came back that they thought I'd got it right.

I'd say that the fact that you made this film in Folsom with real inmates goes to the heart of your approach as a film-maker. The way you work is very Method, if you like.

Absolutely. I immerse myself in a film the way an actor immerses himself in a character and manipulates his immersion and accesses different parts of himself at different times. I have to immerse myself in the world of the movie and I also have to control that; it's not like getting stoned.

Why did you never direct any of 'Miami Vice'?

I didn't want to. I had to maintain my distance; the directing of an individual episode is not the point of my work on the show. The work I did was not so different from what I would do on a feature film if I was directing it – I was involved in the writing, I determined the casting, determined the shape and scope of the rhythms and the patterns.

Were you heavily involved with the post-production of each episode?

For the first year and a half, and then I went off and did *Manhunter*.

Hawkeye is one of America's myths, but what was his function in the books of Fenimore Cooper, and what has Michael Mann made of him, ask John Harkness?

WHITE NOISE

● "True Myth concerns itself centrally with the onward adventure of the integral soul. And this, for America, is [Hawkeye]. A man who turns his back on white society. An isolate, almost selfless, stoic, enduring man, who lives by death, by killing, but who is pure white". (D. H. Lawrence)

The oeuvre of Michael Mann – *Manhunter* and *Thief*, the television series *Miami Vice* and *Crime Story* – may suggest he is the most unlikely director to attempt an historical epic. But his vaunted perfectionism shows itself in the precise detail of his portrayal of the opposing forces in the French/Indian wars, and his high-tech eye transfers easily into the visual grandeur with which he invests the forests of North Carolina, which stand in for Fenimore Cooper's New York frontier. His camera revels in the large-scale combat sequences, and if the fighting styles seem a bit modern for 1757, he reminds us that close combat in an age of single-shot rifles was truly hand-to-hand. There is only one moment of action-movie derring-do that defies logic, when Hawkeye, carrying his own rifle and a second he has picked up from a fallen foe, fires them simultaneously, one in each hand, and kills two enemies. Those old muzzle-loaders were hard to fire with two hands. Firing them one-handed one would hit nothing, given the gun's kick.

So what kind of myth does Mann give us? One can hardly argue against his streamlining of Cooper's plot (there is on-screen acknowledgment of Philip Dunne's 1936 screenplay) and one can only thank him for the stripping down of Cooper's ornately literary dialogue, which on the page suggests that Cooper had never actually heard a person speak. But Cooper is not a great figure in American literature – as opposed to a great writer – because of plot or dialogue. Reading Cooper today is work, and of his forty-five or so books, only the *Leatherstocking Tales* survive. Rather, his novels endure because their plots and dialogue are the wrappings that cover dark secrets and terrible things.

In Cooper, one finds the origins of the obsessions of American culture for the next century. There is the ambivalent balance between (European) civilisation and the unknown terrors of the (Indian) West. There is the isolated hero who turns his back on society and lights out for the territories. Mark Twain may have written one of the most scathing attacks on Cooper – an essay cited by both Mann and Daniel Day-Lewis during 20th Century-Fox's junket for *Mohicans* – but what is Huckleberry Finn but the boy version of Cooper's Natty Bumppo (aka Hawkeye), his companion a runaway slave rather than a dispossessed Indian chief? The terror of miscegenation balances the fascination with the darker races, both as id figures for the continent's white superego and as screens on which to project liberal guilt.

The *Leatherstocking Tales* are the American cre-

ation myth writ large. They embody the tension in American culture between the people who settled and stayed to create civilisation, and the anti-social impulses of the loners who kept driving ever west, trailing civilisation in spite of themselves. Cooper's great invention is nothing more or less than the Western. Without Cooper, there is no *Shane*, no *The Virginian*, no *My Darling Clementine*, no *The Searchers*, no *Unforgiven*. Mann has taken Cooper's creation and attempted to adapt it in a 'realistic' way, which is rather like making a realistic film about Prometheus, or Robin Hood, who is, in certain ways, Natty Bumppo's spiritual ancestor, via Sir Walter Scott's Rob Roy.

Natty Bumppo/Hawkeye stands at the beginning of a line that degenerates into Eastwood's near-psychotic loners, into Billy the Kid and finally, really, into Lee Harvey Oswald – the loner who's good with a gun. The Europeans, especially D. H. Lawrence, twigged to this long before the Americans did. Cooper's inscriptions of American mythology are remembered too often, as are Twain's novels and Poe's horror stories, as books for the young rather than for grown-ups. Significantly, Michael Mann has said that the 1936 film may have been the first movie he ever saw.

The aristocrat

So what kind of Hawkeye does Mann give us, and where does his American myth lead? First, Mann has changed Hawkeye's name. The gnarled, indigestibly comic Natty Bumppo has become the aristocrat Nathaniel Poe. (Daniel Day-Lewis may sport buckskins, but he is undeniably aristocratic.) Second, the Hawkeye who insists on both his whiteness and his respect for Indian ways has become a man raised by the Indians. Chingachgook is no longer Hawkeye's boon companion, but his adoptive father. The Hawkeye who had a certain deference to the English (Cooper's own!) is now an avatar of the independent spirit of North America.

Most revealingly, though, is Mann's statement that "Hawkeye shifts in a generational way. At the start of the picture he's his father's son and his brother's brother, at the end of the picture he's heading into the wilderness to start his own family. He's gone from being a son to being a man in his own right".

Wait a minute! Hawkeye as the passionate



Transformations: Day-Lewis, who gives an aristocratic air to the role of Hawkeye, in 'The Last of the Mohicans'

lover of Cora Munro? Hawkeye's true bride is Chingachgook, just as Ishmael's is Queequeg and Huck Finn's is Jim, though, of course, none of these marriages is ever consummated. Hawkeye has near-romances in the *Leatherstocking* novels, notably with Judith Hutter in *The Deerslayer*, and he is once offered an Indian bride in a scene that is pure travesty. The only proper bride for Hawkeye would have been Stands with Fist, the white woman who had lived so long among the Indians that she had almost forgotten English, in *Dances with Wolves*, which for all its liberal piety shares Cooper's horror of miscegenation, and the Sioux-Pawnee good Indian/bad Indian dichotomy that Cooper established in *The Prairie*.

The lovers

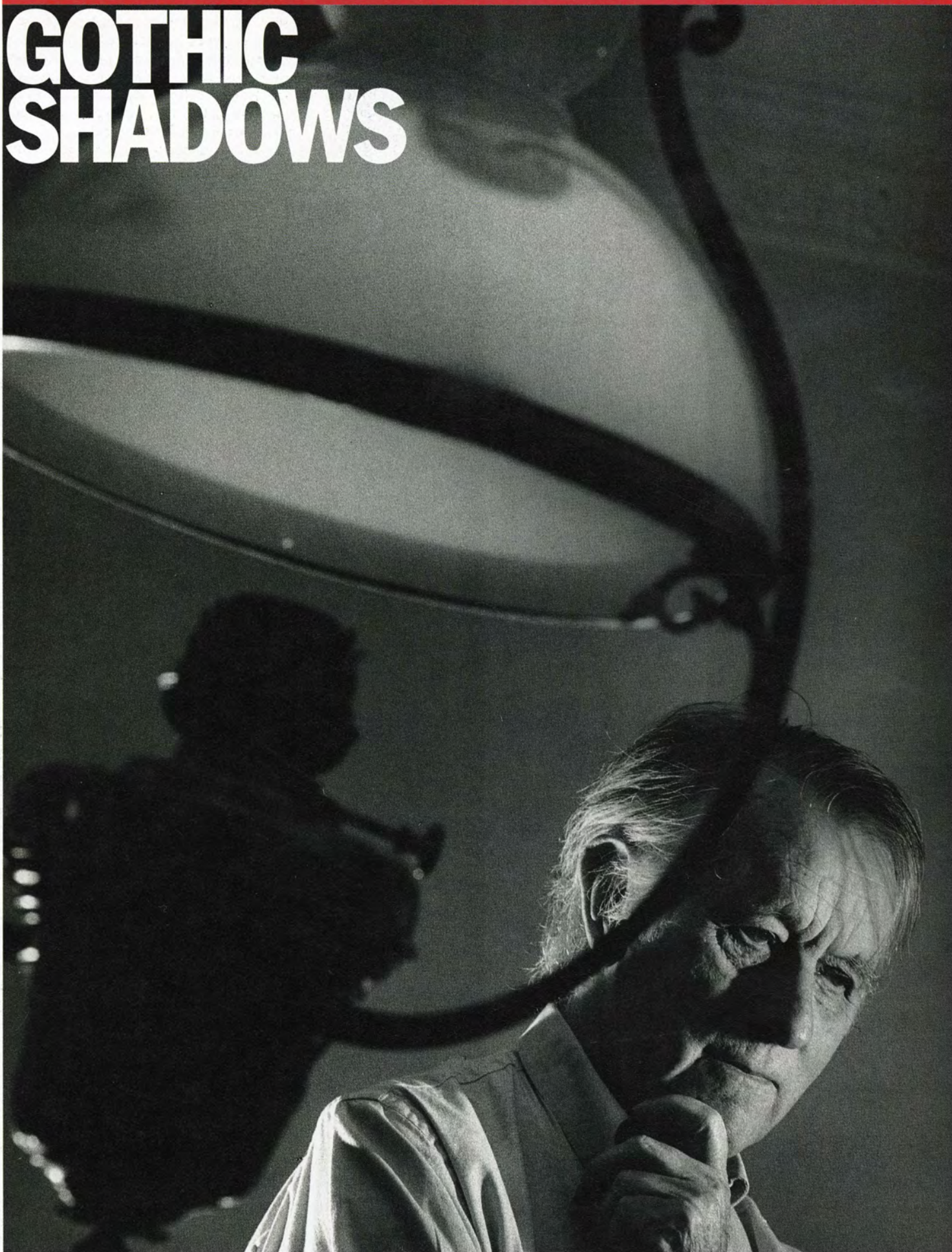
In Cooper, Hawkeye and Cora barely exchange a line of dialogue, and the novel ends with Cora dead and Hawkeye and Chingachgook together, their "scalding tears" watering the grave of Uncas, Chingachgook's son. The point of Cooper's Hawkeye myth is his aloneness, his separateness from the white culture, his rejection of his own culture to live within a culture where he can never fully be accepted. He is a man of the forests who seeks oneness in a pantheistic universe, away from the Protestant coasts, even as he insists on his whiteness. Cooper's isolate has become in Mann a sensitive modern guy, highly skilled at his trade but with time to be passionately engaged with the woman he loves. Mann redefines Hawkeye's romantic status in terms of having a family, which makes him something else, a founding father of the west rather than a man increasingly lost as advancing civilisation pushes him west with the Indians and the buffalo.

Of course, Americans pride themselves on being adaptable people (while screaming about traditional values), so they adapt their myths on each journey through the cycle. American culture is fundamentally transformational, and one generation's romantic hero is the next's imperialist conqueror. A brutal thug like Frank Costello becomes Mario Puzo's Vito Corleone, becomes a brutal thug like John Gotti. One century's lordly isolate becomes the next's would-be family man. America's Imperial thrust, from the East Coast to the Pacific, and out beyond the American continent, has become the nightmare of empire maintenance in the face of declining economic power.

In Mann's hands, *The Last of the Mohicans* is less a blueprint for the rejection of white civilisation than an attempt to give us in the 90s a new birth of a white culture that respects the individuality of other cultures, at least to the point where we can regret their destruction. If Cooper's Natty Bumppo leads to Eastwood's William Munny, then Mann's Nathaniel Poe leads to (and emerges from) *Little Big Man* and Lieutenant John Dunbar in *Dances with Wolves*. In these films, the frontier is less the place where the anti-social goes to escape the strictures of civilisation than the church where the remnant of a liberal culture gathers to worship and mourn a lost and wholly mythic innocence. *'The Last of the Mohicans'* opens in early November and is reviewed on page 45 of this issue

What lies on the other side of horror? Kevin Jackson talks to Freddie Francis

GOTHIC SHADOWS



PORTRAIT BY PHIL SAYER

● *Death Masque* is the appropriately shuddersome working title for a bio-pic of Edgar Allan Poe which Freddie Francis hopes to direct some time next year, with Martin Scorsese as producer. Its screenplay – which, incidentally, has nothing to do with the Poe feature that Sylvester Stallone once had his eye on as a star vehicle – was sent to Francis while he was working as Scorsese's cinematographer on *Cape Fear*. "It was beautifully written, highly literate", Francis recalls, but he still felt it required certain changes before it could go in front of the camera. So far, the director's principal alteration has been to interpolate some pertinent extracts from Poe's tales of mystery and imagination, and especially from his paradigmatic *Doppelgänger* story, *William Wilson*.

For Francis, who says he will be trying to resist "the obvious temptations to make Poe horrific", the choice of *William Wilson* is less a matter of upping the movie's spookiness quotient than of charting the psychology of literary admiration and envy – in Francis' reading, Poe's narrative is an expression of his ambivalent regard for Lord Byron. This notion sounds both shrewd and plausible, yet it is hard not to wonder whether *William Wilson* and its theme of the Double might not have other, less obvious attractions for Francis, especially since his own career provides one of the movie industry's most curious *Doppelgänger* stories.

Bluff, cheerful and dismissive, in the pragmatic English manner, of critical fancies ("I don't take what people write very seriously"), Francis would no doubt be inclined to laugh or to grimace at this suggestion. But it is Poe, again, whose writings – or to be exact, whose loopy account in *The Philosophy of Composition* of what he thought he was up to in *The Raven* – provide us with literary history's most emphatic demonstration that what artists may say about their work is often a long way from being the last word.

Consider, then, what Poe might have titled the facts in the case of Mr Francis. On the light side, we have Freddie Francis the internationally regarded cinematographer, winner of two Academy Awards and upholder of a specifically British tradition of camera craftsmanship; this is the Francis whose agent is listed nowadays in all the right personal organisers on the west coast. In the shadows, though, stands another Freddie Francis: FF the horror-movie director, whose work has until recently tended to be dismissed, patronised and rejected, not just by fastidious critics, but even by Francis himself. Hence his initial unease at being chosen as a likely director for *Death Masque*, and hence his plans to keep the film as far as possible from the Gothic genre. In fact, it was largely his dismay at being identified as a horror merchant that led him to renounce directing entirely for more than a decade.

"The main reasons I got out of the horror genre were first that I never really wanted to get into it in the first place, it was just that those were the only films I was being offered as a director, and second that I used to get invited to all these horror film festivals, and I'd start talking about the directors I most admire, the Billy Wilders and the William Wyllers, and they



'The Small Back Room' (camera operator)

didn't know who I was talking about. So instead I'd start talking about the really great horror film directors, James Whale, Tod Browning and all these people, and they still didn't understand who I was talking about. And I suddenly realised that most of these people were only interested in horror – not just horror films, but horror pure and simple. Well, you know, that wasn't for me, I'm not a weirdo at all".

Francis' rejection of the jobbing *Doppelgänger* who directed the likes of *Trog* (1970) isn't too hard to understand, and yet his readiness to shrug off a corpus made up of more than twenty-five films is too harshly self-critical, especially since it seems to have been the dark FF who drew Scorsese's attention. While Scorsese was well aware of Francis' achievements in cinematography – "Marty was amazing, he not only knew every film I'd worked on as DP, he even knew most of the ones I'd worked on as an operator!" – his avowed reason for choosing Francis as his director of photography on *Cape Fear* was not because of his Oscar-winning work on *Sons and Lovers* (1960) and *Glory* (1989), nor even because of their shared association with Michael Powell. Rather, according to an interview in *American Cinematographer*, it was because of the Englishman's "understanding of the concept of Gothic atmosphere".

In other words, it was precisely because of Francis' having made all those schlocky movies for Amicus and Hammer that Scorsese was interested – or, as Francis puts it, "Marty said he thought that after all those films I'd directed, I was the only one who could photograph that young lady walking down the corridor in the middle of the night and make it believable, even though any sensible young lady would have stayed in bed!" On this point, Scorsese scholars may care to check out the nocturnal wanderings of Jennie Linden as Janet, the troubled teenage daughter of a characteristically dysfunctional Francis family in *Nightmare*.

Though Francis may have found such reasoning perverse, he soon proved to be an inspired choice for the bizarre and shocking moments Scorsese had in mind – another example of Scorsese's ability to feed his own work with material drawn from the places everyone else has either forgotten or, more often, never knew about in the first place.

(Think of his montage of gloriously improbable rock songs for the cocaine paranoia sequence in *GoodFellas*, which incidentally includes an obscure number from the soundtrack of *Son of Dracula*, a minor folly produced by Ringo Starr and directed by Francis in 1974.) The two men worked closely and productively together, and it was Francis who introduced Scorsese to the Panavision gadget that permitted those 360-degree-plus twirls of the camera.

Francis' long-rejected *Doppelgänger* continued to stir after *Cape Fear* had gone into production. When Francis was sent the Poe script in the middle of shooting, "I thought, at my time of life I don't want to run about chasing money for something that may never happen. But I talked about it to Marty, who said, 'Well, maybe you should do it, and I'll help produce it, because I liked that other Poe thing you did'. And I said, 'What other Poe thing?', because I had no idea what he meant. So he said, 'You know, in *Torture Garden*' [Francis' 1967 anthology film, which contains a segment known as 'The Man Who Collected Poe', from a story by Robert Bloch], which I had almost forgotten".

Francis will grudgingly admit that his work on *Torture Garden*, one or two other portmanteau pieces such as *Dr. Terror's House of Horrors* (1964) and even some of the Hammer films was "not too bad", though his satisfaction is confined largely to the ways in which he felt able now and again to transcend essentially crass or silly material. At least some of his genre films are much more accomplished than this suggests, however.

Nightmare (1963), for example, the second of his 'psychological' shockers for Hammer, not only has a deftly written screenplay by Jimmy Sangster (with Hitchcock's *Psycho*, it's one of the few examples of a thriller whose supposed protagonist disappears about half way through)



'Saturday Night and Sunday Morning' (director of photography)

but, under Francis' direction, is at once chilling and weirdly elegant in the best Gothic manner. And while Francis half-dismisses his typically fluid and complex dolly shots here and elsewhere as a simple way of fending off the meddling hands of producers ("We hardly ever had final cut on the Hammer films"), there's undeniably an eerie somnambulistic quality to the way his camera creeps along darkened corridors and sidles into the half-lit bedrooms of troubled sleepers. As its title hints, the film is about bad dreams – of murder, insanity and the walking dead – and by blurring most of the signals that mark the line between its fantasy sequences and scenes of waking reality, *Nightmare* manages to evoke a sense of the ►

◀ uncanny which rivals the more generally acknowledged classics of its kind. It certainly isn't work most directors would want to repudiate, and some of the reasons why Francis has done just that must be sought in the contours of his progress through the industry – a progress marked by one of the most unexpected revivals of fortune enjoyed by any film-maker.

Phase one. After his apprentice years and the Second World War, Francis became an increasingly sought-after and admired camera operator and director of cinematography. In the first capacity he worked with the likes of John Huston (*Moulin Rouge*, 1952; *Beat the Devil*, 1953), Carol Reed (*Outcast of the Islands*, 1951), and Powell and Pressburger (*The Small Back Room*, 1948; *Gone to Earth*, 1950; *The Tales of Hoffmann*, 1951). In the second capacity, he became well known as the man who photographed Jack Clayton's *Room at the Top* (1958), Jack Cardiff's *Sons and Lovers* (1960), and Karel Reisz's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1960) – the films of the British realist revival which prompted Pauline Kael to muse "I don't know where this cinematographer Freddie Francis sprang from. You may recall that in the last year just about every time a British movie is something to look at, it turns out to be his". The Academy Award for Best Cinematography in 1960 signalled his international standing.

Phase two. Justifiably encouraged by these coups, Francis decided to accept the offers that had started to roll in and to turn director. His first film was the "awful" comedy drama, *Two and Two Make Six* (1962), which he followed with a torrent ("I knew I had to make a lot of films quickly for people to start thinking of me as a director") of films in the Gothic vein: science fiction (*They Came from Beyond Space*, 1967), ghostly psychological thrillers (*Paranoiac*, 1962; *Nightmare*) and mainstream horror movies (*The Evil of Frankenstein*, 1964; *The Skull*, 1965; *Dracula Has Risen from the Grave*, 1968).

By most accounts, however, his work had gone into a sharp and embarrassing decline by the early 70s. This was when his resentment at



'Dr. Terror's House of Horrors' (director)

being typecast as a horror director really began to bite, and after a final slew of such sorry indiscretions as *Trog*, *Vampire Happening* (aka *Gebissen wird nur Nachts*, 1971) and that Ringo Starr folly *Son of Dracula* – all of which should be allowed to rest in peace – Francis went on a voluntary long-term holiday from directing and stayed at home for several years writing and developing scripts.

At which point, enter David Lynch and his producer, Jonathan Sanger, who knew that they wanted to shoot *The Elephant Man* (1980) in black and white and were scouting around for cinematographers who knew the ways of monochrome. Given Lynch's penchant for the supernatural, it might have seemed most likely that the work which caught his eye was *The Innocents* (1961), Jack Clayton's adaptation of *The Turn of the Screw*, but no: "In fact, David preferred *Sons and Lovers*. People were warning him, 'Oh, you shouldn't get Freddie because he hasn't done a film for twenty years' [since *Night Must Fall* in 1964], but David said, 'Well, it's a bit like riding a bicycle, isn't it?', and off we went".

The results were eloquent enough that viewers, including some of the same people who had been ravished by Francis' cinematography of the late 50s and early 60s, were in bliss – Pauline Kael, again: "The smoke that softens everything is like J. M. W. Turner clouds, but carrying poison... Lynch and Francis use the greys to set a tone of emotional reserve yet make the whites and the sooty blacks, which bleed out of their contour lines, seem very passionate". *The Elephant Man* was scarcely on release before, as Francis recalls, "I was deluged with offers".

Not all his acceptances were wise – they include Peter Ustinov's *Memed My Hawk* (1984) and his second outing with David Lynch, *Dune* (1984) – but this belated return to his earlier vocation brought Francis good money, good notices and, in 1990, his second Academy Award for Cinematography. At the ceremony, Francis thanked his camera operator and joked, "We're available for work in January!" Martin Scorsese duly noted the dates.

When pressed to describe the exact nature of his work during this late Hollywood phase of his career, Francis is hard to pin down. "I'm often asked at these masterclasses and festivals and so on, 'How did you and Marty get together, and how did you discuss the style for *Cape Fear*?' Well, you know, I'm really not that sort of person at all, so I say, 'I know what you want me to say, you want me to say that I went along to Marty's apartment, I had all these art

books under my arm, and I said, look Marty, this is Van Gogh and this is so and so...'

"But it wasn't like that at all. Marty and I talked about *Cape Fear* for no more than five minutes. I remembered the original film, not so much for the story as for the atmosphere, and after we'd talked about that for a while, Marty knew I was on his wavelength and I knew he was on my wavelength and we spent the rest of the day talking about every other film that had ever been made instead".

Not many people outside the movies have much idea of the cinematographer's contribution to a film, Francis believes, though this public ignorance is quite forgivable in the light of his memories of the British film industry, or what passed for it in the 30s, when he began his career as a clapper boy, loader and, later, focus-puller: "The British film industry in those days was a joke, it was run by rich men who wanted to get their girlfriends into films". One of the sourest aspects of the joke was that even the supposed professionals had not the faintest idea about cinematography: "I used to be appalled sometimes when I was on the set and I'd hear the director say to the cameraman, 'I'd like to do this or that', and the cameraman would say, 'Oooh no, you can't do that', and the director would just accept it. Now this is terrible, because what the cameraman is really say-



'The Elephant Man' (director of photography)

ing is that he won't do it because he won't be able to do his nice photography. But what's that got to do with the story the director is telling?

"This is one of the reasons why, whenever I'm the cameraman on a movie, whatever the director asks for, I'll do. All I will say sometimes is 'That will take longer', or, as I had to say to David on *The Elephant Man*, 'That will be so dark that no one will be able to see it', and he accepted that because he knew I was trying to help him. But in those days, directors came from – well, God knows where. But they had no knowledge of anything, and they'd have to accept everything people told them".

Francis' own self-education in what could and could not be done with cameras was accelerated by the Second World War, during which he worked first as a one-man production unit, writing, shooting and editing films on drill, and then with the Army Kinematograph Service. A large part of the unit's task was to devise ways of filming the previously unfilmable – radar screens, ack-ack installations lit only by infra-red, and (a resonant detail in view of Francis' later forays into gore, and particularly that



'Nightmare' (director)

Filmography

Freddie Francis

Born 1917, London. Studied engineering, before becoming apprentice stills photographer at Shepherds Bush Studios in 1934. In 1936, joined Gaumont-British as a clapper-loader, then at British and Dominion Studios, Elstree, and Pinewood as camera assistant. Worked with Army Kinematograph Service during the war, then as camera operator with London Films.

Films as camera operator

The Macomber Affair (1946)
African 2nd Unit; ph: Karl Struss
d: Zoltan Korda
Night Beat (1947) ph: Vaclav Vich
d: Harold French
Mine Own Executioner (1947)
ph: Wilkie Cooper
d: Anthony Kimmins
The Small Back Room (1948)
ph: Christopher Challis d: Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger
Golden Salamander (1949)
ph: Oswald Morris d: Ronald Neame
The Elusive Pimpernel (1950)
ph: Christopher Challis d: Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger
Gone to Earth (1950)
ph: Christopher Challis d: Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger
The Tales of Hoffman (1951)
ph: Christopher Challis d: Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger
Outcast of the Islands (1951)
co-operator: Ted Moore ph: John Wilcox, Edward Scaife d: Carol Reed
Angels One Five (1952)
ph: Christopher Challis
d: George More O'Ferrall
24 Hours of a Woman's Life (1952)
ph: Christopher Challis
d: Victor Saville
Moulin Rouge (1952)
ph: Oswald Morris d: John Huston
Rough Shoot (1953) ph: Stanley Pavey
d: Robert Parrish

Twice Upon a Time (1953)
ph: Christopher Challis
d: Emeric Pressburger
Beat the Devil (1953)
ph: Oswald Morris d: John Huston
Beau Brummell (1954)
ph: Oswald Morris d: Curtis Bernhardt
Knave of Hearts (1954)
ph: Oswald Morris d: Ren Clement
The Sorcerer's Apprentice (1955)
Short d: Michael Powell

Films as director of photography

Moby Dick (1956) 2nd Unit;
ph: Oswald Morris d: John Huston
Dry Rot (1956) 2nd Unit;
ph: Arthur Grant d: Maurice Elvey
A Hill in Korea (1956) d: Julian Amyes
Time Without Pity (1957) d: Wolf Rilla
The Scamp (1957) d: Wolf Rilla
Next to No Time (1958)
d: Henry Cornelius
Virgin Island (1958) d: Pat Jackson
Room at the Top (1958)
d: Jack Clayton
Battle of the Sexes (1959)
d: Charles Crichton
Sons and Lovers (1960) d: Jack Cardiff
Never Take Sweets from a Stranger
(1960) d: Cyril Frankel
Saturday Night and Sunday Morning
(1960) d: Karel Reisz
The Innocents (1961) d: Jack Clayton
The Horsemasters (1961)
d: William Fairchild
Night Must Fall (1964) d: Karel Reisz
The Elephant Man (1980)
d: David Lynch
The French Lieutenant's Woman (1981)
d: Karel Reisz
The Executioner's Song (1982)
d: Lawrence Schiller
The Jigsaw Man (1984)
d: Terence Young
Memed My Hawk (1984)
d: Peter Ustinov
Dune (1984) d: David Lynch
Code Name: Emerald (1985)
d: Jonathan Sanger
Clara's Heart (1988)
d: Robert Mulligan

Her Alibi (1989) d: Bruce Beresford
Brenda Starr (1989)
d: Robert Ellis Miller
Glory (1989) d: Edward Zwick
The Plot to Kill Hitler (1990)
For TV d: Lawrence Schiller
Cape Fear (1991) d: Martin Scorsese
School Ties (1992) d: Robert Mandel

Films as director

Two and Two Make Six (1962)
The Day of the Triffids (1962)
Uncredited additional sequences;
d: Steve Sekely
Vengeance (1962)
Paranoiac (1962)
Nightmare (1963)
The Evil of Frankenstein (1964)
Dr. Terror's House of Horrors (1964)
Hysteria (1964)
Traitor's Gate (1965)
The Skull (1965)
The Psychopath (1965)
The Deadly Bees (1966)
They Came from Beyond Space (1967)
Torture Garden (1967)
Dracula Has Risen from the Grave
(1968)
The Intrepid Mr. Twigg (1968) Short
Mumsy, Nanny, Sonny & Girly (1969)
Trog (1970)
Gebissen wird nur Nachts – Happening
der Vampire (Vampire Happening,
1971) [In West Germany]
Tales from the Crypt (1972)
The Creeping Flesh (1972)
Tales that Witness Madness (1973)
Craze (1973)
Son of Dracula (1974)
The Ghoul (1975)
Legend of the Werewolf (1975)
Golden Rendezvous (1977) Finished
by Francis; d: Ashley Lazarus
The Doctor and the Devils (1985)
Dark Tower (1989) [as Ken Barnett]
Francis' television work as a director
includes episodes of **The Saint**,
Man in a Suitcase and **The Adventures**
of Black Beauty; in 1975, he directed
(with Wolfgang Storch) a 13-part
series, **The Star Maidens**.

horrible cheek injury in *Cape Fear*) maxillo-facial surgery: "filming operations on men who'd had their faces shot away".

After demob, there were more peaceful lessons to be learned, and from some of the most gifted teachers in the world. "I always considered that Micky [Powell] and John Huston were my real mentors. Micky taught me how to enjoy making films; to him films were always a great adventure, a lot of fun. And John... well, one of the things that Huston said to me was, he had this theory that you look through the camera and say, 'What is the intention of this shot?' And if you don't see any intention, then throw it away and do something else".

There was another important teacher in Francis' own immediate field; one who influenced not only Francis, but a whole national industry. "One of the strengths of the British cinema – and I can say this because I wear two hats – has always been its cameramen. Now when I was a kid, one loved Hollywood films, and one looked around at what we were doing and thought, 'God, we really are in the Fourth Division'. But the guy who used to

stand head and shoulders above everyone else was Freddie Young, and I'm sure that everyone in my position used to look up to him and think, 'Well, we may be in the Fourth Division, but if we behave like Freddie, we can be in the First Division'. And for a long time, we have been. I put it down to Freddie".

Francis' reflections on the ways in which Young's work was so immediately recognisable to his colleagues and juniors clearly reprise his disparaging remarks about the school of "nice photography" which does nothing to serve a story. In some respects, such arguments sound



'Cape Fear' (director of photography)

odd – even perversely self-effacing – in the mouth of a cinematographer, yet Francis is adamant on the issue. Young's work stood out at the time, he maintains, because it was accomplished and professional where just about everyone else's was shoddy and amateurish. But standards of photography have improved, and to such a degree that the DP's work ought ideally to pass unnoticed: "I always say that there are three kinds of photography: there's good photography, there's bad photography, and there's the right photography. And sometimes the right photography doesn't have to be good photography. In this day and age, I don't think one should be able to recognise the cameraman's work from the photography. What defines a good cinematographer is an ability to read the director's mind, so that when you're working together the director is really lighting the picture through you".

With such a firm conception of 'right' cinematography as unobtrusive and signature-free, it's scarcely suprising that Francis is reluctant to name the younger cinematographers he admires, though he will admit that the DP he originally had in mind for *Death Masque* was Jonathan Demme's frequent collaborator Tak Fujimoto: "He's someone who always seems to me to get the right photography, but unfortunately he's busy with Demme next year".

With *Death Masque*, Francis may unexpectedly have reached the stage in his life when he will have to shake hands with his Double. For all his ambition to keep the horrific elements of Poe's life and sensibility in check, even the plainest treatment of such matter will have to contain plenty of what the writer termed the "grotesque" and the "arabesque". If successful, it could prove to be the exercise in Gothic which will win him the same order of impressed attention as his camerawork.

Such an outcome would be all the more ironic in that Francis' most cherished ambition has long been to specialise in comedy – "My number one director would have to be Billy Wilder" – and just about the only film he has directed with which he is really pleased is a little-known black comedy from 1969 about murderous children, done somewhat after Wilder's darker vein, called *Mumsy, Nanny, Sonny & Girly* (prints seem to have vanished, and Francis would like to hear from anyone who knows of their whereabouts). Indeed, Francis hopes that *Death Masque* will prove enough of a hit to make it possible for him to embark on one of the comedy projects he hatched during his long vacation, including a romantic escapade about an ageing roué, *The Train Lover* ("which ideally should have starred Cary Grant"), and a sardonic caper about a famous statesman (originally Churchill) who is assassinated by the movie producers who have bought up the rights to his life story.

For Francis to produce these pictures could add yet another and unforeseeable chapter to a strangely multiple life story: after the outstanding cinematographer and the neglected trader in nightmares, the British Billy Wilder? That lurking Double should get ready to step further back in the shadows, and make room for Freddie Francis' comic Treble.



CINEMA'S CONQUISTADORS

At the heart of Hollywood is the myth of the west, argues Peter Wollen as he looks at Ridley Scott's '1492: Conquest of Paradise' and at how Hollywood has forged the heroes and stories that shape the American sense of national identity



● Ridley Scott's film about Columbus, *1492: Conquest of Paradise* revolves around the first sight of land after the long voyage. The screen is covered in clouds, which drift slowly away, like gauze curtains, to reveal a lush green tropical landscape, filled with trees, foliage and plants. Later in the film, Columbus recalls this image as one that will stay with him in all its vividness until his death. It is an aesthetic image, one designed to appeal to our delight in seeing. It is also an image with connotations of unspoiled nature, awakening in the viewer a presentiment of the destruction of the Amazon rain forest or the North American redwoods. It is an image which is certainly true to Columbus' own experience – his diary is full of expressions of wonder at the proliferation and verdancy of trees on the Caribbean islands. On the other hand, when he saw pine trees, which could be used for shipbuilding, he immediately switched into a different register, that of practicality and exploitation.

Although the curtain has drawn back to reveal the first image of America, we are aware that this image too is like a curtain. Having contemplated, Columbus is fated to land, to rip apart the curtain and to penetrate the interior in search of gold and slaves and sites for forts and towns. From the start there is a tension between the aesthete and the conquistador. Moreover, we are aware that this gaze will be returned by the native inhabitants. What will they see? At the time, they thought they saw

extra-terrestrials, men who came from the skies, as the Spaniards noted. But they soon learned to see these men from the skies in a more terrestrial light.

In his classic article, 'The Western: or the American film *par excellence*', André Bazin attributed the power of the Western, and by extension of Hollywood cinema itself, to its epic grandeur and historic roots. Westerns reminded him of Corneille's *Le Cid* or the Homeric classics – "The migration to the West is our Odyssey". At the heart of Hollywood cinema lay the myth of the West, the evocation of a world in which "knights of the true cause" were set against the forces of evil and "pagan savagery" represented by the Indian. "The white Christian on the contrary is truly the conqueror of a new world. The grass sprouts where his horse has passed. He imposes his moral and technical order, the one linked to the other and the former guaranteeing the latter... Only strong, rough and courageous men could tame these virgin lands".

Two years later, in 1955, Eric Rohmer developed Bazin's ideas even more radically. In an essay in *Cahiers du cinéma*, 'Rediscovering America', he argued that the classical elegance and efficacy of the American cinema came precisely from the historic role of the Americans as a colonising people like the Ancient Greeks, that there was a clear parallel "between the first colonisers of the Mediterranean and the pioneers of Arizona". Typical American heroes are members of "a race of conquerors, which opens up the land, founds cities, is in love with action and adventure, and in spite of or per- ►

Pilgrims or conquerors: Gérard Depardieu as a revisionist Christopher Columbus, opposite; the aliens set foot in the New World and lay claim to the land, above

◀ haps because of this is more determined to preserve its religious or moral tradition". Thus, like their Greek predecessors, Hollywood film heroes are preoccupied not simply with action and conquest, but with the underlying problems of destiny, violence, morality and law.

Neither Bazin nor Rohmer was much concerned with the historical record. They were concerned with the creation of a new form of 'myth'. The concept of 'myth', of course, gave some credibility to their neo-classical interpretation of Hollywood. Yet in effect, they were talking about what E. J. Hobsbawm has called "the invention of tradition".

During the nineteenth century, the major powers of Europe and North America set about inventing an array of ancient traditions to support the official nationalism they promoted. Nationalism depends crucially on the creation of an invented national history, with its monumental heroes, dramatic climaxes, narrative goals. The myth of the West – the ever-expanding frontier, the manifest destiny that underlay America's westward dynamic, the civilising mission of the settlers, the taming of the wilderness, the appropriation of the land in order for it to be cultivated – stands alongside other national myths that justified the unification of Germany, or the expansion of Tsarist Russia to the Pacific, or the scramble for Africa, or the imposition of the British raj in India.

Christopher Columbus is just such a monumental hero. As the historic initiator of the cycle of conquest, plunder and colonisation which was still playing itself out four centuries later in the American West, he plays a more crucial mythic role than even the heroes of the West themselves. To pursue the classical analogy, Columbus was the Theseus who founded Athens or the Aeneas who left Carthage to found Rome. Columbus was the originator without whom the national narrative could not have taken place and who inevitably symbolised the destiny which validated it. Along with Washington and Lincoln, he was an indispensable lynchpin of the invented tradition that America produced within and for itself. Columbus was the first adventurer, the first immigrant, the first prospector, the first pacifier of savages, the first missionary to the heathen, the first law-maker, the first town-builder, the first merchant and entrepreneur, the first slave-taker, the first modern American.

The Columbus myth evolved in three successive periods, reaching a peak every hundred years, at the time of the centennial celebrations. The first significant stirrings of the cult were felt with the advent of American Independence, as the new nation began to construct its new identity and history. Patriotic anthems celebrated the rise of 'Columbia'; poets wrote book-length epics chronicling the exploits of "the new Moses"; King's College in New York was renamed Columbia University; the new national capital, still unbuilt, was assigned its place in the new District of Columbia; and the anniversary of 1792 was marked with dinners, toasts and fervid orations. The capstone was put in place in due course, when Washington Irving wrote the decisive popular biography of

'1492' is in the tradition of 'The Barefoot Contessa' or even of 'The Player'

Columbus, published in three volumes in 1828, in the immediate aftermath of Walter Scott's great romantic project of history creation. This first-wave Columbus was both a romantic genius and an embattled underdog, harried by flat-earthers and envious hidalgos, betrayed by perfidious royalty.

The second wave, which began with the expansion west and was given new impetus by Italian immigration into America, brought Columbus Day and Columbus Circle and culminated in the lavish celebrations of 1892, foremost among which was the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, a commemoration so ambitious that it finally opened in 1893. At the exposition, Kwakiutl and Haida people from British Columbia performed in their painted cedar houses, complete with thunderbirds and totem poles, along with an Apache craftsman, a Navajo family in a hogan, four families of Penobscots in birch-bark wigwams, and Iroquois in a traditional bark house. Most significant of all was the presence of Arawaks from British Guiana in a thatched hut. Presumably these were the best available stand-ins for the Arawak-speaking Taino who were encountered by Columbus on the Caribbean beach that fateful day in 1492. The Taino, who once numbered millions, had vanished from the earth within a few decades of Columbus' arrival, destroyed by forced labour, famine, slavery, slaughter and disease.

This was also the period in which Buffalo Bill was at the peak of his success and in which American Indians first entered show business as performers. The whooping and circling warriors of the Wild West show, ritually defeated and massacred by the white conquerors, were soon to transmute into the whooping and circling extras and stuntmen of the Hollywood Western. The Western, in turn, gave America two great twentieth-century masters of the invention of tradition in Cecil B. DeMille and, of course, John Ford. Andrew Sarris, in the record of his own voyage of discovery, *The American Cinema*, describes DeMille as the last Victorian, while Ford is cast as a director flexible enough to avoid becoming faded and dated. Today Ford's reputation has crystallised around *The Searchers* (1956), the darkest of his films, which, in its desperation, hovers on the edge of

a renunciation of the very tradition Ford had dedicated himself to inventing.

Finally, a third wave of re-examination of Columbus has arrived with 1992. This time there is no grandiose official celebration, even if a life-size replica of the *Santa Maria* is tethered to the river bank in front of the State Capitol in Columbus, Ohio, not far from the life-size topiary reconstruction of Seurat's *La Grande Jatte*, which adorns a nearby park. Even this small gesture seems ironic when we remember that the original *Santa Maria* went aground on a reef while Columbus was asleep and that, after the timber and nails were ferried ashore in canoes by friendly Taino, it was cannibalised to build the first fort in the New World. The reticence of 1992 reflects, however, not a diminution of Columbus' mythic role, but a re-evaluation. Columbus as bearer of civilisation is gradually exchanging roles with the Taino; he is becoming the savage, while they become the civilised, living in harmony with nature and at peace with each other.

It is into this third-wave treatment of Columbus that Ridley Scott's film uneasily fits. The subtitle, *Conquest of Paradise*, follows the lead of Kirkpatrick Sale's major revisionist book on Columbus, *The Conquest of Paradise: Christopher Columbus and the Columbian Legacy*, published in 1990. Sale was a founder of the New York Green Party, and his exactly researched work arraigns Columbus for his deeds and his legacy, drawing a clear connection between Columbus' own fanaticism, and the pollution, plunder, massacre and destruction that followed in his wake. The Taino, in contrast, are presented as pacific, respectful of their environment and balanced in their economic practices. At the same time, Columbus is placed within an historical context that sees his arrival in the Americas as an epochal moment of culture clash, in which Columbus, as protagonist, is little more than the representative of already tainted European values.

In fact, as Tzvetan Todorov notes, there was something "Quixotic" about Columbus. His ideas and theories were often completely crazy and wildly inaccurate and, although he changed the course of history, he was dogged by fiasco and failure – he ran his ship aground, he abandoned his crew, his chief lieutenants repeatedly mutinied, he found hardly any gold worth speaking of, he was quite unable to find any spices, his settlements failed, and he was finally dragged back to Spain in chains and, in his view, cheated of the honours and rewards he deserved. In many ways, he turned out to be the Admiral of the Mosquitoes that his detractors dubbed him. Like others of his kind, he appears hopelessly simple-minded in his encounter with the unknown, sticking with irremediable stubbornness to his preconceptions and wrong guesses. Despite his amazing adventures, he was not an interesting person and his diaries are exasperatingly tedious and uninformative. As 1492 notes, neither he nor anyone around him learned to speak Arawak or understood anything much of who his interlocutors were. At first, he mainly wanted them to point him towards gold, and later simply to bring it to him as a tribute. He could be indul-



Against nature: Sigourney Weaver as Queen Isabel (sic)



gent while things were going well, but turned cruel at the scent of trouble.

The film of 1492 is only incidentally dependent for its effect on the exposition of Columbus' historic role – which might have required either a Brechtian approach alien to mainstream cinema or a voiceover of the kind forced on Ridley Scott with *Blade Runner* (1982) and then removed in the newly released director's cut. Essentially, 1492 is a traditional bio-pic, and like all good genre films, it follows the well-tried conventions, elaborated over the years in 300 or so Hollywood movies. As George F. Custen observes in his newly published study, *Bio/Pics: How Hollywood Constructed Public History*, the bio-pic occupies a particular niche within the invention of tradition, one which codes public events according to a pattern of individual success through triumph over adversity. The hero, according to this pattern, has an innovative and visionary scheme which necessarily disturbs entrenched interests and conservative ways of thinking. Eventually, with help from family and friends, the hero's project is realised and his or her achievements enter the public domain, where he/she survives counter-attack or betrayal before being vindicated.

Darryl Zanuck recognised the essential dynamic of the story in a letter he despatched to the author of *The Story of Alexander Graham Bell* in 1938: "The drama of the story does not lie in the invention of the telephone any more than the drama of Zola's life was his writing. Our main drama lies in Bell's fight against the world to convince them he had something great, and then to protect his ownership". Thus in Ridley Scott's 1492, the drama of Columbus' life lies not in his epochal voyage to America, or

even in his landfall on an island of the Bahamas or his meeting with the Taino, but in his efforts to get his scheme off the ground by debating with dogmatic clerics at the University of Salamanca, pulling strings to reach Queen Isabella, winning her over by his straightforward and immodest ways (a *soupçon* here of the secret love affair between them imagined by the Cuban novelist, Alejo Carpentier, in his *The Harp and the Shadow*). And then, after the voyage, there is his struggle to hold on to his power, his reputation and the public recognition of his achievement.

In fact, as Custen notes, this model closely resembles the struggles of a film-maker to get a project realised, although in the case of 1492, the protagonist is a director rather than a producer. Towards the end of the film, Columbus is confronted by his aristocratic patron and told he is nothing but a dreamer. "I did it!", he retorts. "You didn't". This is the traditional cry of the director against the producer and the critic. The director is easily conceived of as a hero with a vision who finds it difficult to get funded, difficult to execute his or her dream and difficult to control the final product after it is finished. Indeed, in a way, this is the story of *Blade Runner*: the story of an adventure, a voyage, carried out by a perfectionist, a tough captain, even a slave-driver, whose work is distrusted and sabotaged and taken from him, before the original, director's version is finally and triumphantly released. In this sense, 1492 falls into the tradition of *The Barefoot Contessa* or *The Big Knife* or even *The Player* – history refracted into Hollywood on Hollywood.

Within this basic bio-pic framework, 1492 attempts to mellow the biographical record by

Culture clash: Depardieu's Columbus meets the Taino – but who is the civilised and who the savage?

presenting Columbus as something of an egalitarian, an appreciator of Indian ways, an admirer of nature and a victim of reactionary churchmen and vicious hidalgos whose penchant for violence wrecks the idyll of his newly conquered Paradise and turns the New World into catastrophe: a vision not unlike that of *Dances with Wolves*, the set-piece revisionist Western. It would have been easier had the film been unabashedly fictional, like a Western. Again, Zanuck fearlessly pointed the way, in a message wired to a replacement writer six months later, after difficulties had been created by Bell's family: "Appreciate difficulties and am relying on you and Lamar [Trotti] to settle same without destroying story because rather than destroy present dramatic structure I would be willing to forget name of Bell and other real names and make same plot with fictional names stop They must realize that from time immemorial there has existed dramatic license which was practised when I made Disraeli House of Rothschild Lloyds of London Suez and when Warners made Pasteur and Zola stop". This telegram brusquely encapsulates the Hollywood view of history, ruthlessly prepared to subordinate the shadowy events of the real world to the hard facts of Hollywood and its own "time immemorial". Ridley Scott's film remains a compromise formation, caught between the revisionist history of a Green intellectual like Kirkpatrick Sale and the truly Columbian vision of a conquistador like Darryl Zanuck.

'1492: Conquest of Paradise' opens on 23 October and is reviewed on page 41 of this issue

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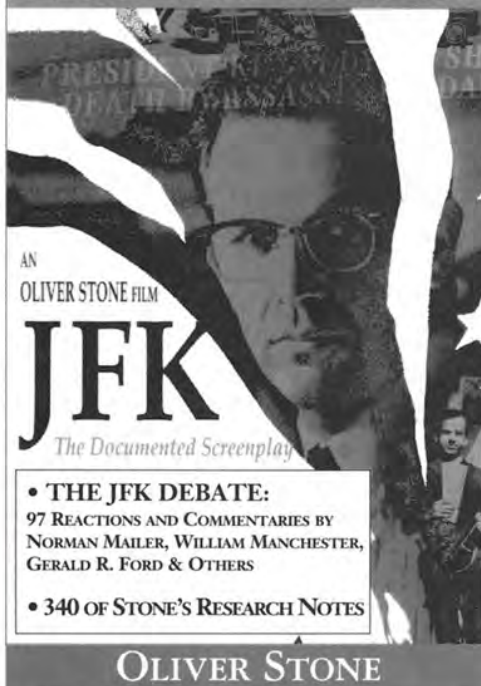
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In the first of a series on sequences from classic films, Chris Wagstaff looks at De Sica's 'Bicycle Thieves' – and challenges its usual reading as realism

COMIC POSITIONS

It may seem perverse to start a detailed shot analysis of *Bicycle Thieves* (*Ladri di biciclette*, 1948) with general reflections about De Sica's work, but a detailed analysis must have a purpose; it is not an end in itself.

So, to begin with, let us identify two problems. The first relates to the way De Sica's neo-realist films have been analysed hitherto. They have been seen in terms of an accurate representation of reality. André Bazin, their finest champion, talks about them abolishing cinema, and confronting the audience with reality: "If the event is sufficient unto itself without the direction having to shed any further light on it by means of camera angles, purposely chosen camera positions, it is because it has reached that perfect stage of luminosity which makes it possible for an art to unmask a nature which in the end resembles it". Could this be nonsense? I want to argue that by combining certain genre choices with cinematographic techniques (specifically, camera angles) that force the viewer to read, interpret and respond to, rather than just observe, the image, De Sica constructs a discourse and manipulates the viewer's emotions.

The second problem concerns what people see as a dichotomy in De Sica's artistic career. De Sica affirmed himself as Italy's greatest male comedy lead, most notably in the celebrated comedies of Mario Camerini of the 30s, and thereafter right up to his death. His career as a director began with a trilogy of three comedies before the war, and continued with many more after the war. In between (1943-1952) came his neo-realist films, of which *Bicycle Thieves* is the most well known. While it is true that the need for money, to which his two families and compulsive gambling gave rise, can explain many seemingly incongruous choices he made after the war, we still have to ask ourselves whether the two spheres, of comedy and of neo-realism, can be reconciled, or whether they have to be treated as separate artistic realms. Indeed, this was the fundamental question implicitly tack-

led by a huge retrospective of De Sica's work (amazingly, the first on any such scale) put together by Roberto Turigliatto for the 1992 Pesaro Film Festival in June. I think that a stylistic analysis of *Bicycle Thieves* answers the question. This is not the place for such an analysis, but since the question lies behind much of this article, and its conclusions, we need to touch upon it.

Comedy and melodrama pose problems of the positioning of the spectator, and the emotional response of that spectator to the emotions of the characters. In screwball comedy and in farce, the suffering of the characters gives the spectator pleasure. In sentimental comedy and melodrama, the spectator shares the suffering of the characters, and pleasure comes from the resolution that turns suffering into happiness. Realism doesn't pose the same problems. Rather than being a genre, realism tends to be seen as an alternative to genre. Without wishing to disturb the whole hill of ashes in which theories of realism smoulder, we can say that realism is generally perceived as an objective reflection of reality that begins where the engineering of emotional responses, so characteristic of genre, leaves off.

Bicycle Thieves is built around comic structures and gags. There is a surprising amount of slapstick (an accordion player booted off a ladder, a double chase through a church, a jack-in-the-box-like smack on the head from a priest in a confessional, outrageous language in church, copy-cat sarcasm at a rehearsal of a skit, and many more examples). Satirical comedy abounds, and the church mission to the poor is again fertile territory. English audiences (who are ill-served by the subtitles) may miss some of the humour in the second visit to the clairvoyant. There is bathos in her use of oracular language for banal matters. She tells an unrequited lover that it is pointless to sow your seed in barren earth; you hoe and harvest nought. He says he cannot understand a word of what she is saying. Exasperated, she aban-

dons the rhetoric: "You're ugly!" (subtitled as "That's enough"). The man's response to this treatment is equally comic. The episode then dissolves into slapstick as Bruno jumps the queue for his father, and is set upon by a client's lapdog.

Comedy, therefore, is one of the genre conventions that gives form to the forty-five episodes (separated by dissolves) that make up the narrative. It has a further virtue. Comedy and melodrama deal with the anxieties of the characters, and offer a position from which the viewer can respond emotionally to those anxieties, either with laughter, or with anxiety followed by relief. Anxiety colours much of De Sica's cinema, and accounts for Italian critics' descriptions of it as a cinema of suffering. Antonio is anxious. The actor chosen to play him, Lamberto Maggiorani, was a worker from the Breda factory who had brought his son to test for the role of Bruno. Maggiorani was anxious throughout the filming about his acting ability. De Sica did not efface this anxiety, but rather used it to represent the anxiety of the character Antonio. The film is not so much about the unfortunate practical consequences of the theft of the bicycle as about Antonio's anxiety and what it does to him and his relationship with his son. One of the original scriptwriters, Sergio Amidei, left the film because: "It didn't seem right to me that a comrade, a communist, a worker from the outskirts of town, whose bicycle is stolen, shouldn't just go to his local party headquarters, where they would find him a bicycle". If someone had lent Antonio a bicycle, there would be no film.

Italian critics have had difficulty deciding how much of the film comes from Cesare Zavattini's writing and how much from De Sica's direction – and they have had remarkably little to say about the latter. If you concentrate on the story and the characters, it can seem like Zavattini's film. As soon as you remember yourself, your position as viewer, you see how much of it is De Sica's.

CHANGING PLACES

The first two sequences of the film are shot in completely different ways. In the first sequence (from which shot 1 is taken), Antonio Ricci is told about his job, and gives his wife the news. She is collecting water at a standpipe. Together they go up to the apartment. Antonio angrily bemoans the fact that he has no available bicycle, and Maria tells him he shouldn't have pawned the one he had in the first place. She angrily takes the sheets off the bed in order to pawn them. There is a dissolve (one image fades away while the next fades up over it) into the next sequence (from which come shots 2 and 3), in which they pawn the sheets, and are given a little extra for them by a kindly clerk, after which Antonio goes to another window and redeems his bicycle.

Shot 1 typifies the way the first sequence is photographed. The camera stands well away from the couple, includes both of them together in the frame (sometimes called a 'two-shot'), one usually higher than the other (or nearer to the camera, or one standing and the other sitting). Their poses convey the stress that they are under: Antonio is swearing, and gesturing aggressively towards Maria (in an earlier shot, she rounds angrily on him). The hard angles of the building, softened by no rounded surfaces, seem to echo their postures; indeed, even the edges of masonry close to us, and distant from the centre of the image, are in quite sharp focus, which is not the most obvious way of focusing the camera for this shot. Antonio's jaw is tensed, his hand raised to accompany his imprecation, while Maria wearily hauls the bucket up the stairs, rolling her eyes in exasperation. We, the viewers, stand outside the couple, observing impassively their hostility. Our experience of their emotion is merely that of knowledge; we do not share it. It is conveyed with an Eisensteinian use of body and architecture, but no one says that realism cannot use artistic means to enhance its impact.

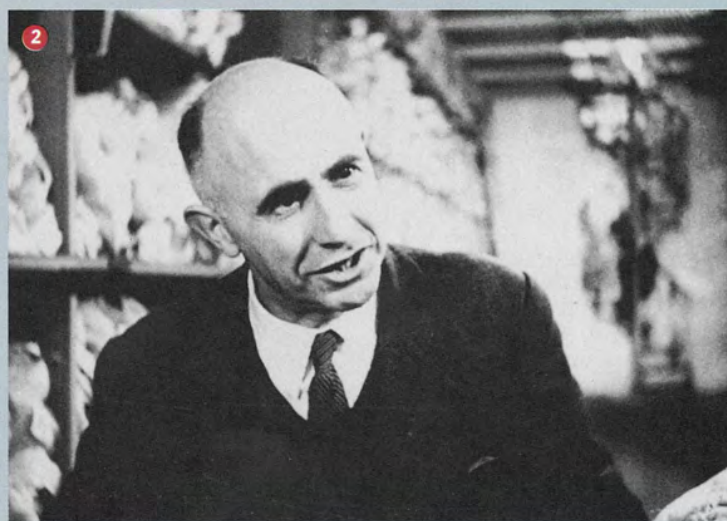
Shots 2 and 3 make a completely different use of cinematography. They are the two elements of what is called a reverse-angle sequence. Crudely

speaking, the camera is placed between two people or groups who are talking to each other: when one person speaks, the camera photographs that person, and when the other replies, the camera reverses its angle of view (turns round 180 degrees, in other words), and photographs the second person. The effect for us, the viewers, is that we take up the position (or very nearly) of the person being spoken to.

Shot 2 shows the kindly clerk smiling, and agreeing to pay a little more for the sheets than he first offered. He is leaning towards 'us' (Maria, in fact), with his head tilted in a gesture of acquiescence. 'We' are looking at him through the counter window, and are receiving his benevolence. Behind him is the wall of shelved linen that the poor have had to pawn and, in a later shot taken from the point of view of Antonio looking through a nearby window, we shall see his own sheets being carried higher and higher up to the very top shelf. Shot 3 is, therefore, a shot of 'us', the addressees of the clerk (at first it is of Maria only, but then Antonio leans into the frame). But by now, 'we' are in the position of the clerk, being addressed by Maria.

I am exaggerating, of course, but only in order to emphasise how very differently the viewers are treated, in shots 2 and 3, from the way they are in shot 1. In shot 1, we observe the emotions of the characters; in shots 2 and 3 we share their emotions. In shot 2, the background is softly out of focus, the perpendiculars softened by being blurred and packed with the bundles of sheets. In shot 3, the window has rounded corners, and it is out of focus, as are the figures behind the couple.

Technically speaking, we would refer to shot 1 with the term 'deep focus', and to shots 2 and 3 with the term 'shallow focus'. What is interesting is how the two-shot and deep focus of shot 1 force us, as viewers, to observe and judge impassively, while the reverse-angles and the shallow focus of shots 2 and 3 draw us into an identification with the characters. De Sica is manipulating the viewer.



TOTAL ABSORPTION

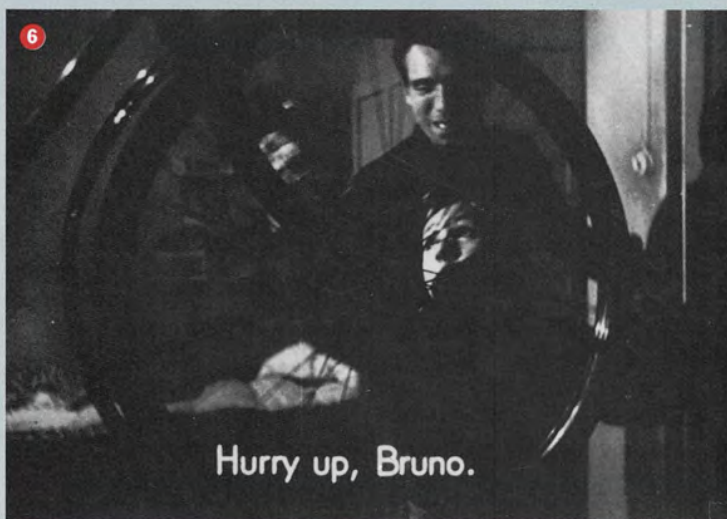
Reverse-angle cinematography can do more than emotionally manipulate the viewer; it can force viewers not just to respond passively to a position or point of view forced upon them, but actually to read a complex point of view from the composition of the image. Shots 4 and 5 are of the restaurant to which Antonio takes his son Bruno in order to make up for the slap he has just administered. It is a scene full of comedy, and yet eloquently serious. In shot 4, Antonio is ordering wine, and enjoying the music played by a Neapolitan group behind him (De Sica was Neapolitan, and the popular song being sung informs a young Neapolitan woman that she can give her newly born son any name she likes, but that won't change the fact that he is black). Of course, there is no way that wine is going to make Bruno feel better, and that is exactly the point: Antonio's anxiety makes him unable to do things for Bruno. Antonio is shot from a point above and to the left of Bruno's head which, in shot 4, occupies the bottom right-hand corner of the frame.

The camera reverses its angle, and we see Bruno (shot 5). But he is shot from somewhere near Antonio's right elbow, almost at table level; and at that moment the waiter brings the wine and the glasses. The waiter's hands, the carafe and the wine glasses completely obscure Bruno. Shot 5 is a shot of Bruno, and yet it is taken from an odd position if it is meant to be from Antonio's point of view. To be that close to table level is to be closer to the child's point of view than to that of the father, and the 'erasure' of the child is what Bruno experiences, not the father. So the shot expresses Bruno's point of view. Nevertheless, the subordination of Bruno to the father's need to diminish his own anxiety (with alcohol: in one shot, he actually says: "Let's get drunk") is what we read from the implications of that shot. What is in the foreground of a shot is hierarchically superior to what is in the background, and what is clearly visible is superior to what is obscured; this is the 'code' that generally operates in cinematography. De Sica is relying on this conventional

code to lead us to a 'reading' of shot 5, as well as using the camera angle to express Bruno's experience. But shot 5 doesn't actually take up anybody's physical point of view.

Neither does shot 6, in which Bruno is first introduced into the story. Large and in the centre is the bicycle. Partly obscured by the wheel, and mostly in shadow, is Bruno - I have in fact chosen the frame in the shot where his face is the most fully lit; a second before and a second after, you can barely make out his face. Behind him is his father, urging him to hurry. The camera's position is against the wall of the bedroom, and Antonio, plainly visible, is furthest away from that position. Nevertheless, this shot, which so perversely introduces us to the second most important person in the film, signifies Antonio's point of view regarding his son, by subordinating him to the bicycle. Antonio is looking at Bruno, but by saying "hurry up", he is demonstrating that his main concern lies elsewhere. In other words, what we are introduced to is not so much Bruno as Antonio's point-of-view-regarding-Bruno.

Indeed, this shot is a subtle reversal of a composition that is fundamental to the film, and to the viewer's perception of the characters: in the foreground Bruno is under threat or coming to harm in some way, and in the background is Antonio looking the other way, compulsively pursuing his obsessive quest (some examples: Bruno is pestered by a pederast in the foreground, while Antonio looks at bicycle frame numbers in the background at the Piazza Vittorio market; or near the end, leaving Via del Panico, Bruno is nearly run over in the foreground, while Antonio pounds ahead across the intersection in the background). The composition of these images, just like that of Bruno behind the bicycle wheel in shot 6, impose a reading on the viewer. If we were just observers, the film would simply be the story of a misfortune that befalls a working-class Italian. But as 'readers', we are required to come to a judgment about the meaning of Antonio's total absorption in his quest for the bicycle. Instead of asking someone to lend him



one, he falls a prey to anxiety, and becomes too obsessed to be a father to his son. His search is for the alleviation of his anxiety, and when that escape is ultimately denied him, he must face the anxiety, and in the affection of his son, find it tolerable. With the failure of his attempt to steal a bicycle himself, his obsession is destroyed, short-circuited, as it were, and he is left with his son once more. As a series of observed events, the story is inconclusive. As the product of a reading of the images and sounds, it has a clear, powerful conclusion.



Issue-based, and with a strong sense of time and place, 'Film on Four' owes much to previous British television fiction, argues James Saynor on its tenth anniversary

WRITERS' TELEVISION

● Nineteen-eighty-two was a symbolic year of triumphs and portents for the moving-image culture of Britain. On 28 March, *Chariots of Fire* tidied up at the Oscars – an event which, according to the film's screenwriter that night, marked the start of an aggressive new presence for British cinema on the world scene (even if his movie was financed largely by Arab and American money). On 10 October, amid rather less fanfare, the BBC screened the first episode of a five-part drama series, *Boys From the Blackstuff* – a project which, observers soon agreed, represented a similarly momentous pick-me-up for domestic British television drama. And a third event soon afterwards signalled the start of an effort to hybridise the two forms – the launch of Channel 4 on 2 November, and with it the feature-fiction strand, *Film on Four*.

David Puttnam, the *Chariots of Fire* producer and by 1982 the most prominent spokesman for commercial British cinema, was already

predicting that television, in one form or another, would become the most significant venue for the work of British film-makers in years to come – a prophecy that shocked those who yearned for a cinema-led revival on the back of movies like *Chariots* and *Gregory's Girl* (1980). Meanwhile, within television, the flagship of drama – the 'single play' – was withering on the vine. Single-drama producers – and that really meant producers at the BBC, since ITV had largely abandoned the form as a staple of its schedule – were fighting a cold war with their mandarin overlords, few of whom had any background in drama. Several of the most adventurous offerings of the late 70s had been banned from transmission, and the coffee-table values of 'series and serials' were perceived as being in the ascendant.

Perhaps most significant, producers were at odds with the very techniques of production demanded by their institution. The great

investment in electronic studios in the 50s was looking like a major historic mistake. In the studio, the trajectory of a drama was as much in the hands of the actors as those of a director; producers were chafing to do all-film work, while the new 'accountancy culture' at the top of the BBC seemed reluctant to redirect resources away from video, despite the fact that audiences, critics and awards panels clearly preferred the single play on celluloid. In-house craft skills often remained primitive relative to those available to the commercial film industry, particularly in the area of post-production.

Some sparky BBC producers gave up on the corporation, or were given up. One, Mark Shivas, left in 1979 to make two films for an ITV company that garnered theatrical releases. Another, W. Stephen Gilbert, departed after a censorship row the same year, concluding that "plays are becoming simply too diffi-



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cult for an unwieldy bureaucracy to administer". In 1980, the critics Carl Gardner and John Wyver wrote that the single play, "threatened on every side", could look forward to "its most difficult decade yet". In a reference to the founding father of single-play drama on British television, they concluded: "Even if the 80s equivalent of Sydney Newman was working in... television today, it's certain he or she would not be allowed the freedom to develop drama in a comparable way".

Tyro talents

Channel 4 plunged into these gloomy waters like a frisky hippo with an unlikely sense of timing – opening its jaws to many surplus or stymied talents and energies on the British moving-image scene. Its first chief executive, Jeremy Isaacs, was a former ITV programming honcho with an arresting tele-movie lately to his name (Scottish TV's *A Sense of Freedom*, 1981)

and with an enthusiasm for the discourses of cinema bred from a recent stint on the BFI Production Board.

Isaacs adopted a rambunctious, can-do attitude when it came to filling the fourth channel – overturning many of the conventions about programme genres, production methods, and the need to address a homogenised 'family audience' that had done so much to clog creative arteries at ITV and the BBC. In his application for the new job, he had mentioned a desire, "if funds allow, to make, or help make, films of feature length for television here, for the cinema abroad".

The writer Stephen Poliakoff pressed on him the idea that some films should also have domestic cinema releases prior to their television screenings – something that was impossible at the BBC because of the corporation's unwillingness to renegotiate union agreements with its technicians. With the help of Sir

Trapped in space: Neil Jordan's 'Angel', an urban fairy tale with Stephen Rea as a saxophonist on the run, opposite; Pascal Ortega's 'Bad Hats', a First World War vagabond movie, above

Richard Attenborough, Channel 4's deputy chairman, Isaacs secured £6 million from his board of directors to fund the channel's movie-making ambitions for its first year. Relative to the service's overall budget, these plans were grandiose: about a twelfth of programming funds was to be spent on the one-offs, which would fill only one per cent of total airtime. Isaacs himself coined the moniker, *Film on Four*, and outlawed the word 'play'.

After the stage and television director, Christopher Morahan, had turned the job down, Isaacs appointed David Rose to run the channel's new 'fiction' department. Rose, then nearing retirement, was a cherishable figure from the BBC whom the BBC had never properly cherished. A teddy-bear of a man, like Sydney Newman, he was to fulfil to a large ►

◀ extent the brief that Gardner and Wyver had laid down for a new drama messiah.

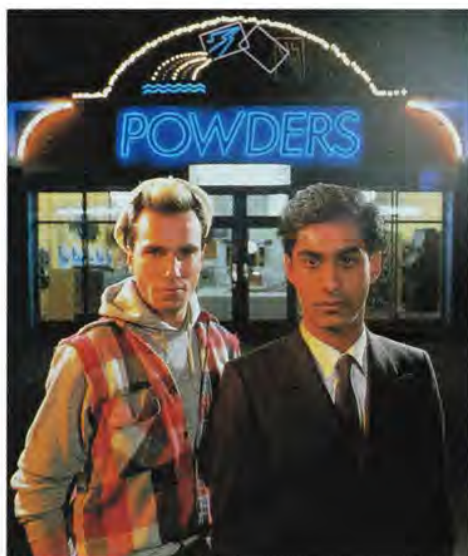
In fact, it could be argued that Rose had already fulfilled it in the 70s, during his tenure as head of the English Regions drama unit at the BBC. Operating from Birmingham, Rose had run this autonomous outfit – providing fringe plays and serials for the two networks – as a greenhouse for new talent, new styles and new ways of working. Like Newman a decade or so earlier, he championed a cannily expressive brand of highly contemporary drama – work which was ‘issue-based’, yet also gregarious and entertaining; work which was naturalistic yet also capable of formal somersaults previously unseen on British television. On the one hand, he stated: “The first and last thing is the writer, as far as I’m concerned”. On the other, he was disdainful of the electronic studio, and wrangled as many film-making resources as he could out of the cumbersome corporation.

The result was a body of work, often scorned by the London mandarins of the time, which now dominates our consideration of television drama in the 70s. Drawing on writers from the growing regional theatre of the period, recruiting visually adventurous directors like Philip Saville and Alan Clarke, and encouraging writer-directors (a hitherto rare breed on television), Rose presided over output like the Malvern fantasia *Penda’s Fen* (1974), a bizarre BBC art movie; David Hare’s first film, the devastatingly effective psychodrama *Licking Hitler* (1978); the early work of Mike Leigh; and *Gangsters* (1976), an expressionistic genre piece featuring the best car chase ever served up to the BBC’s docile ‘family audience’. It was therefore appropriate that Rose should also have been the commissioning spirit behind that tentpole fiction of 1982, *Boys From the Blackstuff*.

Film on Four was an extension of these initiatives – a development of Rose’s penchant for a writerly, oxygenated neo-realism, frequently utilising tyro talents. “Nothing much changed for me”, Rose reflects laconically today on his 1982 change of job. But not everyone appreciated this: the film-maker James Scott observed of *Film on Four*’s early produce, “The films could have come from anywhere, even dropped from the moon”. He added that they “don’t relate to anything very much, and show no awareness of cinema tradition” – which was also true, though not necessarily in the pejorative sense meant by Scott.

The Birmingham *oeuvre* and the Channel 4 space-oddities greenlighted by Rose were simultaneously engorged on texts and on an acute sense of geography – if, from a London perspective, something of a lunar one. The formula of socially displaced characters firmly positioned in a regional landscape had very much characterised the offerings of Rose’s 70s writers like Peter Terson, Alan Bleasdale and David Rudkin of *Penda’s Fen* fame. (Rose had told Mike Leigh that every single scene of his 1976 *Nuts in May* should be shot out of doors.) Similarly, at *Film on Four*, Rose stressed that the works should “take strength from a sense of the particular, a sense of time and place”.

The dramatist Alan Plater, analysing Rose’s regional vision, wrote that the Dorset-born pro-



Small is beautiful: Stephen Frears and Hanif Kureishi’s ‘My Beautiful Laundrette’, a cinematic success for ‘Film on Four’

duction maestro saw the English provinces as “a special mixture of urban and rural traditions, delicately and uniquely interwoven”. Several of the first batch of Channel 4 movies – among them Neil Jordan’s blood-and-neon gangster pic, *Angel* (1982); Colin Gregg’s Loachian shore-leave saga, *Remembrance* (1982); Peter Duffell’s seaside sex comedy, *Experience Preferred But Not Essential* (1982); the vivid First World War vagabond fable, Pascal Ortega’s *Bad Hats* (1982); and the disastrous Gaelic pageant, Barney Platts-Mills’ *Hero* (1982) – seemed informed in varying ways by Rose’s elusive regionalist aesthetic. All were about dislocated folk trying to negotiate social equilibriums for themselves within decisively drawn provincial landscapes. And even a film set in London, Jerzy Skolimowski’s haunted and hilarious *Moonlighting* (1982), fitted into the pattern: the chattering capital was here imaged as a faraway, closed-off site of loss and estrangement to its marooned Polish handymen.

Realism meets fantasy

In its quintessential products, Rose’s cinema represented an intense amalgam of realism and fantasy. The way he describes this himself is to say: “You have to think in terms of *need* and *leaping*” [my emphasis]. Rose started his career in the historically obscure story documentary unit of the BBC in the 50s, in which writers would decamp to a specific community – of, say, coalminers or seafarers – for weeks at a time, and then return to write an imaginative recreation of the spirit of the place. This was the way writers worked on *Z-Cars*, the cop show with which Rose made his name as a producer in the 60s, and it was the ‘need’ of a concrete locale combined with the writerly ‘leaping’ of a talented dramatist to which Rose most responded. If the end result was text-centred, in the manner of all television, it often didn’t feel like the ‘literary’ product of a metropolitan culture either: the work was, by the standards of British television drama, curiously classless and ideology-less.

Penda’s Fen and *Boys From the Blackstuff* are probably the twin peaks of this Rosean tradition on television. And a re-viewing of the

above-mentioned Channel 4 films shows how the Rosean principles were allowed to mature at Charlotte Street. The movies collectively represent a fascinating clutch of new work – engaged with geography in both social and topographical terms (or what Rose calls “landscape in the broadest sense”); uncompromised either by the institutional modes of representation of television, or by cinema’s vague demand for an impersonal spectacle.

Rose and his *Film on Four* assistants spent a good deal of time honing the revered scripts prior to production. “With a film, the writer knows he has the freedom to set down what he wishes to see and hear, and that the director can probably fulfil those requirements”, Rose commented – an anti-auteurist stance that wasn’t to endear his output to many *cinéastes* on the local scene. ‘Authenticity’ was a big word with Rose, and usually only writers with roots – or with an extensive portfolio of research – could provide this crucial essence, not directors, who were essentially *metteurs en scène*. To Rose, an auteur meant a writer-director; he insisted that directors who wanted to put ‘A Film by ...’ at the top of their handiwork had to have penned the screenplay as well. (Funnily enough, he had previously got into trouble at the BBC for billing *Licking Hitler* as ‘A Film by David Hare’.)

Those films that were first haphazardly released into cinemas did small beer at the box office (the only theatrical *succès d’estime* among the early bunch – Peter Greenaway’s *The Draughtsman’s Contract*, 1982 – had been essentially a BFI production). Critics writing a year or two after the start of *Film on Four* gave the exercise a tepid reception. The agenda-setting Gardner and Wyver wrote in 1983 that “to date, none of the *Film on Four* have in any way illustrated a real engagement with contemporary society and politics” – by which they probably meant “a real engagement with the ideological preoccupations of the metropolitan left”, a set of values with which Rose seemed to have little in common.

Many *Films on Four*, of course, were to be set in a London and Home Counties orbit that was reassuringly familiar and class-oriented, and one or two – notably Richard Eyre’s *The Ploughman’s Lunch* (1983) – even engaged with the programmatic concerns of the metropolitan left. Ironically, the film which, as Jeremy Isaacs declared, marked the strand’s “coming of age” was a liberal-metropolitan drama that Rose had originally perceived as strictly small-screen fare, of interest “only to people south of the Thames”. Still, he generously funded it to the full tune of £650,000: the film was Stephen Frears’ *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985).

This, along with Rose’s 22 per cent investment in Wim Wenders’ *Paris, Texas* (1984), put *Film on Four* on the map as far as credibility was concerned. The Wenders film won the Palme d’Or at Cannes in 1984, and the Oscar-nominated *Laundrette* was an astonishing off-mainstream theatrical hit in both Britain and America – encouraging a flood of interest in low-budget British movies among US independents. “If you had the right small British film, you could reckon to get 50 to 60 per cent of the

budget from America at that time", Mark Shivas wistfully recalls. *Film on Four* had been floated on a pool of remarkable largesse by Isaacs, and this was now beginning to be paid back in the form of international kudos. In 1987, Rose was the recipient of a special award at Cannes – a festival at which Channel 4 had stakes in twenty films – for services to cinema, and British newspapers were suddenly full of praise for *Film on Four* as the saviour of the domestic industry.

Isaacs' philanthropic film-investment policies – taking equity stakes in movies in addition to the money covering television rights; holding back films from transmission for a year or more so that they could see the light of the big screen; paying over the odds for foreign movies bought off the shelf in order to aid the art-house distribution sector; supporting the BFI Production Board and bankrolling British Screen and the workshop sector – made little sense in strict TV-accountancy terms. It was a patronage of the wider film culture that would have been impossible at the BBC, and that was to look increasingly questionable at Channel 4 as the service entered a recessionary strait-jacket under his successor, Michael Grade.

"Our principal interest is to get films for Channel 4, but we'd be kidding ourselves if we said that the total we put into each film is either just a television [rights] payment or a pure investment", Isaacs conceded in 1987. "We've helped to make over 100 films now, and only around half a dozen have so far returned money to Channel 4". In effect, Isaacs had been subsidising the film industry with money from ITV (and money from the government, because of the way ITV companies could write off their subscription to Channel 4 against the Exchequer levy), in order to do the right thing by the film community and to garner plaudits from around the world. Some of this may have fed back into higher television audiences for *Film on Four*, but in general, movies that merely paddled into the theatrical arena didn't score conspicuously better on the box.

Although television-viewing levels for *Film on Four* have always been reasonable (the films shown in 1990-91 were watched by an average of two million people), as early as spring 1983 Isaacs was making it clear that the highly expensive strand was something of a luxury: "However successful you think the films have been, they haven't been a success as a series might have been in that way". The solution at that time was to shift money from factual programmes into drama serials. But by 1990, shortly before his much-delayed retirement, Rose was signalling the need to divert money from movies into higher-rated, long-form drama. This process seems to have been accelerated under his dark-horse successor from the National Theatre, David Aukin, who is recently reported to have presided over a huge, £4 million cut in the *Film on Four* budget. (Channel 4 won't say what the new annual expenditure of *Film on Four* is – suggesting that the figure might now be embarrassingly close to the £6 million it started off with in 1982.)

Other factors have contributed to the decline of the strand. First, production in-

flation in the 80s meant that the cost of small, 35mm movies was rising more than twice as fast as the budget for *Film on Four*. Channel 4 aimed to provide three-quarters of the money for its first twenty films; today, its average contribution to a *Film on Four* is only 40 per cent. Accordingly, the kudos that the channel can claim as the true progenitor of the movies is reduced – even if this kudos were to make fiscal sense, or even if the channel were to prove to have a new head of fiction with as clear an idea of filmic 'authenticity' as Rose had.

Second, just as *Film on Four* was scoring its greatest successes in the mid-80s, insiders were noting a sudden drop in the quality of new projects being tendered, and in the number of emergent British film-makers worthy of the name. This led to a deliberate undercommissioning in the latter half of the decade, and it is not clear that the talent pool has since topped itself up. Third, co-production money from the US evaporated in the later 80s – and some think that *Film on Four* helped kill its own golden goose. Says Mark Shivas: "There are those who say that, because *Film on Four* made such small and esoteric and unsuccessful films, they were the ones to bring the market to its knees. I don't subscribe entirely to that view; but probably there were more esoteric films – films which wouldn't travel – coming out of *Film on Four* than was wise".

Changing channels

Mark Shivas is now the BBC's drama supremo, and in the last six years his organisation has reformed its policies towards fiction-making, in unseemly imitation of Channel 4. The studio-centred single play has largely bitten the dust, to be replaced by a smaller number of one-offs from a BBC Films operation. These feature-lengthers have generally lacked either the sense of identity of the single-play tradition that linked Sydney Newman with *Play for Today* (1970-1984), or anything analogous to the 'landscape' aesthetic of Rose's offspring.

The BBC has solved its union problems over theatrical releases, and now has a lot more money for movies than Channel 4. Yet over the past year or so, Shivas has fought trench battles within the BBC to hang on to both his budget and his prized in-house production resources. His ability to field the latter may be crucial in attracting international investment to projects that the BBC would want to flag as its own, as the corporation can never afford to take equity punts on properties in the freewheeling way Isaacs managed.

Meanwhile, the BBC has ambitions in the medium to large-budget area of movie-making that Channel 4 has always lacked. Rose would never agree to changes to a script in order to satisfy a financier from overseas – and, in any case, he fogeyishly preferred the artistic possibilities of the low-budget film. (He once said that the medium-sized Goldcrest movie, Marek Kaniévska's *Another Country*, 1984, in which Channel 4 had a small pre-buy stake, would have worked better as a low-budget film, grumbling that expensive pictures can "destroy the original intentions of the writer and director".) Rose didn't see himself as operating in the com-

mercial world, and David Aukin claims to share this puritanism, though it's an attitude that's going out of fashion. According to Alan Howden, a key executive in the BBC film-funding area: "The tendency in recent years has been to see the British film industry very much in terms of material that's been produced under the *Film on Four* type of operation. At the BBC, we're talking about films that are pitched more into the mainstream category of entertainment, and we're also talking about films where the budgets are much higher. Our belief is that it's worth developing films with good commercial possibilities".

After stalled attempts to do business with a major Hollywood player – Arnon (*Pretty Woman*) Milchan – the BBC has recently announced a link-up with a high-rolling European outfit, Ciby 2000 of France, albeit on a project at the low-budget level. Three BBC films – *Object of Beauty* (Michael Lindsay-Hogg, 1991), *Enchanted April* (Mike Newell, 1991) and *Truly, Madly, Deeply* (Anthony Minghella, 1992) – have meanwhile had prestigious theatrical outings in the US, though Mark Shivas remains ambivalent about the benefits of domestic cinema runs prior to television screenings.

Film on Four provided vital support for the infrastructure and culture of British fiction-making during the 80s, with money that was, in some measure, enlightened state funding by the back door. It created continuity of employment for many, while doing little to pump-prime the commercial movie business. At the end of its first decade, it increasingly resembles an albatross that the cash-strapped Channel 4 is feeding with reluctance. But it's passed on a film-making baton to the BBC, which, given current corporation politics, suddenly looks quite secure in Shivas' hands.

Today, it's hard to imagine a movement to save *Film on Four* in the manner of the groundswell to defend the totemic single play a decade or so ago. Television people no longer fetishise one-off drama in the way they used to – partly because of the new possibilities opened up in the 80s for serial drama, spurred as much as anything by Rose's own *Boys From the Blackstuff*. Meanwhile, many doe-eyed film lovers in Britain still hanker after a 'purer', more auteurist national cinema that, somehow, will one day be more passionate, more lyrical, more imagistic, more dream-driven, more genre-aware than anything that the low-budget *Film on Four* has fostered within these shores.

But shrewder students of the British film-making tradition – which is to say of the British realist tradition – will recognise that many of the *Film on Four* that David Rose could most call his own gave that tradition an important and exhilarating new spin around the block, especially in the early years of his tenure. True, if a young, untried David Lean or Orson Welles had knocked on Rose's door in the early 80s, he would probably have been told to relocate to Carlisle for a year or two and to learn how to write a script; or he would have been paired with somebody else's screenplay, the integrity of which he would have had to treat with hieratic respect. But, for my part, I'm not sure that would have been such a bad thing.

EVGENY TSYMBAL TALKS TO FOUR RUSSIAN DIRECTORS

The editor of 'Sight and Sound' suggested that I organise a round-table discussion with three or four film-makers from the former Soviet Union. He wanted me to bring together people of different ages, representing different cinematographic styles and tendencies. The idea didn't work out. Some of the people I approached refused to talk, saying they hadn't filmed anything lately. Others refused when they found out who else I'd invited. And a third group was always

too busy working or travelling. So in the end, I did four separate interviews with film-makers from the Russian Federation who were ready to answer the questions I put to them. Their answers – and none of them knew what the others had said – are varied, yet at the same time have a lot in common. Their main concern is about the future of film-making in Russia, its spiritual and moral potential, and the threat posed to the survival of a national cinema by market-economy conditions.

INTO A NEW WORLD

Valentin Chernykh was born in 1935. He was the scriptwriter for over thirty films, among them *Moscow Distrusts Tears* (1979), directed by Vladimir Menshov, which won the Oscar for best foreign film in 1981. He works in Moscow.

Vladimir Khotinenko was born in 1952. He is the director of *Alone and Unarmed* (1984, co-directed with A. Fattakhutdinov); *Shooting in the Back Country* (1986); *A Mirror For the Hero* (1987); *Sleeping Car* (1989), which won several international prizes; and *The Swarm* (1990). He works in Ekaterinburg (formerly Sverdlovsk).

Nikita Mikhalkov was born in 1945. He is an actor, director and scriptwriter. His films as director include *At Home Among Strangers*, a *Stranger At Home* (1974); *A Slave of Love* (1975); *An Unfinished Piece for Mechanical Piano* (1976); *Five Evenings* (1979); *Kinfolk* (1982); *Dark Eyes* (1987); and *Urga*, which won the Golden Lion in Venice in 1991. He works in Moscow, Rome and Paris.

Vasily Pichul was born in 1961. He is the director of *Little Vera* (1988), which won more than ten prizes at international festivals, and of *Dark Nights in Sochi* (1990).

Evgeny Tsybal was born in 1949. He is the director of the BAFTA award-winning *Defence Counsel Sedov* (1988) and *The Tale of the Unextinguished Moon* (1991). He works in Moscow.

Evgeny Tsybal: What is the meaning for you of the concepts of 'Soviet cinema' and 'the Soviet cinematic aesthetic'? Do Soviet aesthetic traditions influence your work?

Pichul The aesthetics of the Soviet cinema are the aesthetics of a poor cinema – a cinema in which the director is severely limited by budgetary constraints. In my work now I am trying to explode this aesthetic and make large-scale, expensive cinema within the conditions of the former Soviet Union. When I think of traditions, on the other hand, it is less a question of cinematographic ones than of moral ones. We were brought up with certain moral positions, and the sense that you must be a decent person is still part of our culture.

When I was young I was greatly influenced

by Shukshin. I grew up in the provinces, and at the time cinema was seen as a closed world which people from ordinary families couldn't get into. When I dreamed of becoming a film director, Shukshin, a village lad who'd become a director, was my model. Later, when I was studying at the Film Institute, it was Tarkovsky as someone who had resisted systematic pressure by the state and who made films that interested the entire world. Panfilov's *The Beginning* (1970) and *I Wish to Speak* (1976) were examples to me for a long time of the kind of cinema I wanted to make.

Khotinenko There have been several stages in Soviet cinema and several very different traditions. There's the epic tradition of Eisenstein and Pudovkin, which leaves me cold, and then there's what I'd call the tradition of folk art, which I find much more interesting and moving. Mainly I mean Pyrev, though there were others too, like Rostotsky, with *It Happened in Penkov* (1958), and Shukshin. These films have a tradition of feeling and of popular contact through song.

Today, Socialist Realism and its traditions have withered into 'Sovart': an ugly, lifeless invention made up of primitive clichés and the self-satisfaction that comes from being uneducated and limited. In the 60s and 70s, there were Chukhrai, Alov and Naumov, Bondarchuk, Mikhalkov, each with his own style. And Tarkovsky, who stood alone. All of them were professional with a certain level of culture. And to me, this sense of culture contained two important components – what you might call moral behaviour and moral sense.

Mikhalkov 'Soviet' cinema was in many ways the successor to Russian traditions in art. If you take the 'moral codex of the builder of Communism', it's really not so different from the Gospel; in principle the commandments are the same. For example, the absence of sexual acts on screen is not just a question of censorship; it's as much linked to an inner embarrassment that stops you looking. There is a certain spiritual tradition, an aesthetic, a popular sense of self which became part of 'Soviet'

art, though in some cases, of course, it was taken to idiotic lengths.

The early Soviet cinema that influenced me most was that of Barnet and Dovzhenko: Barnet for the lightness of his structural concepts, which made his dramatic and directorial work the work of an artist, and Dovzhenko for his stunning poetry. To me, Barnet's *The Girl with the Hatbox* (1927) and *Outskirts* (1933) are both works of pure genius.

Chernykh I was never interested in Soviet cinema because of its sterile international style and tedious narrative quality, except perhaps for films like *Chapaev* (1934), though structurally that's a typical war film. I understand the significance of Eisenstein, Dovzhenko and Pudovkin, but it's not my cinema. You could say that after the death of Shukshin, Russian cinema as such ceased to exist, and that has left a big gap. Our task now is to find a way to study the Russian character on screen.

Have western or early Soviet or 'shelved' films influenced your work?

Mikhalkov The removal of films from their cultural context, isolation from world cinema – these things undoubtedly did an enormous amount of harm. It often led people to reinvent the wheel, to carry on elaborating themes which world culture had long since assimilated. And of course this slowed down the development of a professional cinematic culture. For example, in *A Slave of Love*, I consciously used a stylistic device I'd seen in George Roy Hill's *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, music and songs against a background of indolent wiling away of time. The entire prologue is constructed around this, but it doesn't mean that I stole it from him: I used the device for entirely different aims. Young directors have two paths open to them: doing things the way other people do, or doing them any way you like, but not the way other people do.

As far as the release of so-called 'shelved' cinema is concerned, it's a bit like an amnesty: it's not just the political prisoners who are let out, but the common criminals as well. So it's very important to decide whether a film was shelved for ideological reasons, or because it wasn't any good. I know directors who now portray themselves as freedom fighters, but the films they had shelved were so dreadful that it's not just a question of not showing them, they should never have been made in the first place.

Chernykh The release of the shelved films hasn't had any influence on our cinema: with perhaps two or three exceptions, they are all aesthetically, dynamically and pictorially old-fashioned. And they've had no influence on viewers: they're too late, and anyway there's now a wave of completely different cinema. The people who put in the orders for Soviet cinema, and the people who censored it, that is to say the party bosses, were all middle-aged and wanted to see things which catered to their tastes, whereas today's viewers, like it or not, are young people who want something much more dynamic.

Pichul When I was a student, the inaccessibility of those films had a great influence. At the

Moscow Film Institute we watched the films of Kira Muratova, which were banned at the time. Then each time we saw a western film it was like a holiday, and many of them seemed the acme of cinematic perfection. We saw black-and-white copies of Visconti's films and we almost died of excitement, then Fellini was the main idol of Soviet directors, so for twenty years we saw nothing else and we thought he was the ideal of what a director should be. Everyone tried to copy him, but there were a lot of other excellent directors whom we knew nothing about. Now I'm quite calm about it. I realise that not everything that seemed to be a revelation at the time really was.

Khotinenko Cultural limits are not always harmful, they also have their positive sides. For example, the fact that Japanese culture was cut off from western influences made it possible for them to create absolutely original painting, theatre and so on. That cultural stability, based on national traditions, is a storehouse from which you can draw your images and inspiration. Their amazing plasticity, their original sense of perspective, their acting style all came into their films, but now, under strong American influence, a lot of it has been lost.

As far as banned or shelved films go, for a long time I was unable to see Buñuel's *Un Chien Andalou*. I knew three or four shots – the palm with ants coming out of it, the close-up of the blind boy, the razor cutting through an eye – and when I finally saw the film, it didn't add much. Of the shelved films, there's probably only one, Andron Mikhalkov-Konchalovsky's *The Story of Asya Klyachina* (*Asya's Happiness*, 1967), that gave me extreme aesthetic pleasure. I would have lost something if I hadn't seen it, but in a spiritual sense rather than professionally. You can't repeat what he did there – even Konchalovsky hasn't made any more films like it. That isn't a path you can imitate.

A lot of western film production is genre film. Is this the future for Russian cinema, in the good or bad sense?

Mikhalkov In my view, Soviet cinema always was genre cinema in the good sense of the word, though whether genre distinctions were fully observed is another matter. Sergio Leone's films escaped the boundaries of genre and provoked an enormous public response. But their success in no way diminishes the mastery of Fred Zinnemann in *High Noon*, which fully observes the rules. It seems to me that unless you have a profound mastery of aesthetics, genre films remain very superficial, and to follow the rules of a genre in no way protects you from making something schematic and feeble. A film needs to be fertilised by the director's personality, and culture, and by some inner impulse.

Chernykh I think our cinema will become genre cinema. There's no alternative. Cinema is subject to the laws of public reception, and the viewer is used to playing according to those rules, so if we want to survive we have to accept them. There was a time when our public liked long novels and long films in which you could indulge yourself in feeling, but now there's a new generation and that doesn't interest them.

Pichul There's no alternative. Every year it costs

more to make a film, and each time you have to make people pay their own money to watch it. And genre films provide the simplest schemas, the things people want to see. Genre cinema already exists here. Our innumerable pirate videotheques have established it. A large part of the cinema audience over the last seven years has formed its taste in the video salons, and if you go into a videotheque, you'll see the notices: 'erotica', 'detective films', 'fantasy', 'thrillers'. I don't know whether the genre 'erotica' exists in world cinema: these people have formulated the genres to suit the demand. And these are the criteria the exhibitors are going to follow, and soon the exhibitors will force the directors to follow them too. On the one hand, it's a nightmare; on the other, if you want to make films, then you're going to have to bear it in mind (although of course you can deceive the viewers, write 'erotica' and then put what you want in it). The whole world has gone down that road, and I don't see any particular problem with it. Between me and the viewer are distribution structures, and they want to know what sort of goods I'm offering.

Khotinenko What is genre? A dramatic stereotype? An auxiliary mechanism? A professional construct? A structure to hide behind? The mass public watches very little that isn't genre cinema. But as far as I'm concerned, there are good and bad films, and what genre they belong to is more a question for the critics.

What kind of solution can there be to the current distribution problem?

Mikhalkov You can't resolve the distribution problem if you haven't got the right product. All over the world they put a huge amount of money into distribution: there are some films for which they put twice as much money into the advertising budget as they do into making the film. It's an entire industry: analysis of market tastes, marketing, promotion at every stage of production, working out an advertising strategy and poster image, attracting the attention of the press. These days the ability to shoot a film is not enough.

The film production companies must have distribution or at least advertising sections. We have to study the way it's done in the west and apply it here, taking local conditions into account. We can't just follow the American path: we don't have the money or the star system; we have a different mentality, a different system, a different people. The avidity with which people watched American films five years ago is now on the wane because what we're getting is a wave of junk, the kind of stuff the Americans themselves hardly watch. Buying good films is expensive, so we come back to the question of money. I'm afraid I haven't got a concrete answer to your question.

Khotinenko The position as regards the distribution of Russian films is truly horrifying: in my view, it's as great a catastrophe as the absence of sausage. Much of it comes down to the absence of a cultural policy: there isn't anyone in parliament or the government who's concerned about cultural problems. Even the Bolsheviks, in 1918, paid culture, and the cinema

in particular, an enormous amount of attention. The cinema helped them to instil their utopian ideas into the masses, and they well understood its significance. Today, people don't want to think about that, and in a society without culture there is a huge rise in immorality and nihilism.

So we need a well-worked-out distribution system and a government policy aimed at supporting national cinema. They have it in France – a very wise system that has helped them to hold on to their national cinema, which is essential if we want to retain our national consciousness. We are a country of marginals as it is, and whatever good films we might make, nobody needs them. We make 400 films a year, and nobody sees them.

Chernykh There are various ways to solve this problem. One is to use your enemy's weapons, to make films as good as theirs. And another is to study the psychology of the Russian viewer.

I believe our viewers are becoming like American viewers: they don't give a damn about anything apart from their own problems. So if we make films using genre formulae and high production values on Russian subjects that address the problems the public comes up against every day, I think our national market will be quite capable of competing against American and Indian cinema. Getting into the American market, on the other hand, is not a realistic goal, though there might be some hope for Europe, especially eastern Europe, where they are worried about their films not getting into the world market, and are keen to get into ours. And it's important to us too that they should watch our films.

I'm not convinced that quotas could work: it's very difficult to force anyone to do anything here, they always find ways around it. And in any case, the exhibitors can't survive now without American films, so if you ban them you'll just find a black market growing in video copies. The exhibitors won't start showing our films until they realise that it's to their advantage to do so. I can't see any other way.

Pichul You have to work on your picture while it's in distribution: you have to advertise it, push it, cultivate interest in it, otherwise it will just disappear. A director can't stop working on a picture just because it's completed; that's when you move on to the next stage. There's no getting away from the American films that are in distribution here, so you should take them into account and try to make better films than the Americans do. Otherwise we'll go under and we'll be reduced to making advertisements, pop promos or television programmes.

In general terms, what's good about film-making in this country is that for the time being, thank God, we're still free. I can do what I want the way I want. And of course there are other reasons for optimism: we have an enormous country, people feel the need to watch films, films get produced, we have several good directors. It's a colossal market, and it seems to me that there's every chance that Russian cinema can become an important part of the cultural life of the country. That possibility exists, and if we don't make use of it, we'll lose it.

Translated by Julian Graffy

A passion for preservation

Ben Brewster

Nitrate Won't Wait:

A History of Film Preservation in the United States
Anthony Slide, McFarland, £28.15, 228pp

Anthony Slide's new book is essentially a history of film archives in the US, based on the public record, interviews with surviving pioneers of archival work, and his own professional involvement. Film preservation is, however, both a wider and a narrower topic than film archives. Strictly speaking, film preservation consists in guaranteeing the survival of information contained on currently existing film. A wide range of individuals and institutions, from private collectors to commercial distributors to national libraries, are doing more or less to preserve film, and Slide tries to cover this range. But preserving film is only a part of a film archive's responsibilities; many film collections exist to make films preserved elsewhere available to a wider public, major archives devote more or less of their resources to other activities such as film restoration (not at all the same thing), film cataloguing, exhibition and educational activities. Slide is careful to delimit his subject and to denounce confusion about it, for example in the colourisation controversy, which has given rise to a National Film Preservation Act in the US which makes no provisions whatsoever for film preservation.

Nitrate Won't Wait coheres around two underlying themes. The first is familiar: that films surviving today, both inside and outside archives, are subject to irresistible degradation, and far too few public funds are currently devoted to their preservation. These funds have not been increased for more than a decade, and neither the film industry itself, nor (with honourable but rare exceptions) private philanthropy, has filled the gap. In addition, Slide points out some less obvious consequences. Archivists have no choice but to be selective about what they preserve; but to be rationally selective is itself an expensive process. The archive must know what it holds, the state of preservation of what it holds, and what has already been or is currently being preserved elsewhere; it must develop a selection policy and it must implement that policy. But all the money currently available for preservation would be used before these things could be achieved. In practice, what archivists do is summed up by one of Slide's interviewees: "Expediency is what matters. When you have something in your hand and you know it's valuable, preserve it". The danger of this position is that preservers cannot know whether what they have is valuable unless resources are provided for establishing that knowledge. However, many of them share a fear, often justified by events recorded in Slide's book, that any concession on this point will result in preservation being replaced by the bureaucratisation of the preservation process.

This bureaucratisation is Slide's second theme. It is one of the most serious consequences of the underfunding of preservation that the funds that do exist are diverted in this way. This is exacerbated by

the fact that, unlike most European film archives which are either autonomous or attached to a parent body with cinematic concerns (as the National Film Archive is to the British Film Institute), the major US archives are departments of non-cinematic institutions: an art museum (the Museum of Modern Art Film Department), the national copyright deposit library (the Motion Picture Division of the Library of Congress), a university (UCLA Film and Television Archive), an archive of still photography itself subordinated to the administration of the US equivalent of a stately home (George Eastman House). These archives have suffered from ignorant and casual managements who either begrudge the high costs of film preservation or have tried to exploit the glamorous associations of cinema to promote their own careers. Such managers often believe – as do administrators of public funds and private philanthropists – that the film industry itself should be willing to support film preservation. Hence they are inclined to withhold resources and devote what there is to expensive and often fruitless attempts at fundraising. In the face of the antics of these bureaucrats, Slide champions the unsung hands-on film preservers, but his horror stories often suggest that what US film archives really lack is a truly faceless bureaucracy, with clearly defined responsibilities and, crucially, assured sources of funding, both public and private. Prima donnas, despite their genuine commitment to archival preservation, themselves bear some responsibility for the conflicts that have divided the archival community.

I have one quarrel with this informative and entertaining book (which despite the reservations expressed above is not just a story of failures): the title. The slogan 'Nitrate Won't Wait' is itself an example of the inflated rhetoric which has been forced on archivists by their financial insecurity, and, unfortunately, it may prove to be a hostage to fortune. Slide mentions the vinegar syndrome (the chemical process which attacks triacetate film stock), but he seems to regard it as a minor problem, assuming that cellulose triacetate is an inherently much more stable stock than cellulose nitrate, and hence that a film transferred to acetate is archivally secure. Nothing is less certain. Accelerated ageing tests undertaken at the Rochester Institute of Technology, on both nitrate and acetate stocks, revealed no significant difference in their propensities to decay, and a representative of Agfa told a recent conference of the Association of Moving Image Archivists that his company will soon abandon the manufacture of celluloid stock altogether. The polyester stock which is likely to replace it is less susceptible to the hydrolysis which all cellulose salts are prone to, but it is unwise to assume that polyester stock is secure against other forms of degradation until it, too, has withstood the test of age.

The situation might thus seem even more alarming than Slide's title slogan suggests. But there is another way of looking at the matter, namely that the problems of preservation are chronic rather than critical. There is not, and probably never will be, a permanent physical storage basis for films (and the fact that much of the world's written records are now archived on cellulose acetate microfilm suggests that it is not

only film archives which face the problems of celluloid degradation). On the other hand, existing stocks of nitrate film, let alone acetate and polyester, are not going to vanish overnight. The film archive community should endeavour to keep all such stocks under the best life-prolonging conditions and maintain processing, viewing and screening facilities for them all. These are the tasks to which much greater resources than are currently available need to be devoted and it needs to be clear that such resources are not being sought for one-off rescue operations but for the maintenance of a preservation programme that will continue into the foreseeable future.

Federico Fellini: conjuror and showman

Geoffrey Nowell-Smith

The Cinema of Federico Fellini

Peter Bondanella, Princeton University Press, £35 (hb), £15 (pb), 367pp

In 1960, for the first and only time since 1945, domestic films outdid Hollywood at the box office in Italy. And much of this success was due to one film, Federico Fellini's, *La dolce vita*, which by the end of its first run had not only recouped its production costs but actually outgrossed *Ben Hur* at the box office – particularly surprising in a country which has always had a taste for grand spectacle. *La dolce vita* is, of course, a giant studio spectacular itself. But it is unusual for a spectacular film in that there is little plot and what action there is is rarely initiated by the central character. Indeed, it is hard to imagine a more inert hero than Marcello Mastroianni.

The phenomenal success of *La dolce vita* made Fellini bankable, and in spite of one or two recent flops, he has always been able to find money for his films, many of which continue to touch a chord in the popular imagination. But it seems to have sparked off a creative crisis. It took Fellini three years to make his next feature, and when he did it was a film about a film director unable to make the film he is supposed to make until he realises his source of creativity must be found within himself rather than in something outside. The film offered to the spectator – *8½* – is thus a record of the film the director should have been making had he relied on his memories and fantasies instead of a narrative script.

With *8½*, Fellini more or less gave up any attempt to construct films based on conventional notions of character, background and narration. Making a virtue of necessity, he has turned his inability to tell stories in an objective mode into an opportunity to explore an inner world projected outwards on to a cinema screen, in the process drawing attention to the filmic quality of the images on display. In *The Cinema of Federico Fellini*, Peter Bondanella calls the films in this mode "metacinema" in an analogy with metalanguage. But this analogy seems to me confusing. The point of metalanguage is that it is a way of using language to comment on language – usually to clarify it. Although Fellini sometimes uses cinema in this way, more often he adopts the role of



Federico Fellini directs: showman, conjuror and creator of some of the most admired films of all time

a conjuror, commenting on his own tricks. Would you call that "meta-conjuring"?

Of the films which are not explicitly metacinematic, some, such as *Amarcord*, retain the semblance of objective narration. But in all Fellini's later films, subjectivity – in the sense of 'the way I remember it', 'the way I imagine it', 'the way I imagine the character might feel it' – dominates the representation, at the obvious expense of mere factuality. *Amarcord* is a fantasy about small-town life under fascism (a fantasy about fantasy indeed, since much of its subject matter is the sexual fantasising of male adolescents). But it also has a ring of truth about it; life probably did feel like that to young people growing up in the Italian provinces in the 30s. Often, however, Fellini's insistence on the subjective is obtrusive, and a discussion in terms of metacinema merely gives an artificial dignity to a rather wearying form of showmanship – or should one say showoffmanship? – on the part of the director.

Bondanella's book is very much an advocate's job, intent on persuading the reader of Fellini's virtues. These virtues are many, but they do not extend to progressiveness in sexual matters. Fellini may well believe, as Bondanella claims, that the Italian male is infantilised and never really grows up, but endlessly showing men being infantile and women only as objects of male sexual fantasy does not amount to a critique of this attitude, but rather to an indulgence. Nor is it necessary, in order to build up Fellini, to denigrate other film-makers, especially neo-realists, and crudify alternative positions, especially those of "Marxists" and "Leftists", as the author frequently does. Zovattini, who was both a neo-realist and a leftist, as well as a wise and witty man, is particularly traduced.

Bondanella is on stronger ground when he stresses Fellini's roots in popular culture

– in circuses and comic books and indeed in popular cinema itself. Fellini's films are deeply part of popular culture – a popular culture of a distinctly European and early twentieth-century kind which is disappearing in much of Europe. So long as this culture survives, or is remembered, even if only to lament its passing, Fellini's films will themselves remain popular. It is a pity, therefore, that outside Italy Fellini is pigeon-holed as a maker of 'art-house' movies and that critics are tempted to defend him (or more often attack him) in ways which are irrelevant to his unique genius as a popular artist.

Culture cultures

James Donald

Cultural Populism

Jim McGuigan, Routledge, £11.99, 290pp

While reviewing Jim McGuigan's critical history of "British cultural studies", my bedtime reading was 1984. Orwell describes Winston Smith listening to "a monstrous woman, solid as a Norman pillar, with brawny red forearms and a sacking apron round her middle" singing a popular tune as she hangs out her washing. "It was one of countless similar songs published for the benefit of the proles by a sub-section of the Music Department. The words of these songs were composed without any human intervention whatever on an instrument known as a versificator. But the woman sang so tunefully as to turn the dreadful rubbish into an almost pleasant sound".

Orwell's attitude – a casual contempt for the cultural industries allied to a vile sentimentality about the monstrous yet redeeming proles – has not altogether disappeared from British intellectual life. But it was radically undermined by the tradition of cul-

tural studies that emerged in the maligned decades between 1956 and 1979. As McGuigan suggests, the decisive break was Raymond Williams' slogan "culture is ordinary". The complexity and value of many mass-cultural products was recognised – most notably Hollywood cinema – and the lazy imagery of audiences as 'cultural dopes' was replaced by ethnographic studies of their scepticism and inventiveness.

Along the way, however, something has gone wrong. The radicalism of taking 'ordinary culture' seriously has turned into "the banality of Cultural Studies" (Meaghan Morris' withering phrase). Jim McGuigan shares this exasperation, and his book is an attempt to explain how and why banality – or what he calls "cultural populism" – took over. "Populism" is a polite way of saying priggishness: "I am a politically correct person. I like *Blind Date*. Ergo, *Blind Date* must be politically progressive". In the academy, the logic becomes: "People like *Blind Date*. The people are a politically progressive force. Ergo, what people do with *Blind Date* at least cancels out its reactionary ideological content, and may even make it politically progressive". Here, 'the people' operates as a purely rhetorical mouthpiece for the tastes and opinions of the critic. This misses the crucial ambivalence of the *popular*: the tension between 'the people' as an imposed identity ('freeborn Englishmen', 'the working-class movement', 'the consumer') and 'people' as the diversity which always undermines such norms. In celebrating a sanitised alternative canon, the populists return, uncannily, to Orwell's condescension and bad faith.

Against this, McGuigan's case is that taking people and their cultures seriously is incompatible with treating popular culture uncritically. In citing chapter and verse to support his critique, he does a valuable job. Why, then, did I end up feeling this survey is in some ways part of the problem rather than a possible solution?

In part, it is because McGuigan fails to offer a more convincing perspective. In place of fuzzy populism he calls for a "hard-boiled depth materialism", but in practice he uses this alternative to rehash old cases and finger the usual suspects. The mean streets down which our cultural gumshoe goes are the well-trodden alleys of youth subcultures, soap operas, tabloid journalism, pornography and post-modernism. And having witnessed some of the cases he looks at, I also have doubts about his interpretations and explanations. He is simply wrong, for example, to dramatise debates around 'structuralism' (or the textual determination of subjectivity) and 'culturalism' (or neo-Gramscian hegemony theory) in the late 70s as a conflict between the Society for Education in Film and Television and the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies.

Above all, the focus of McGuigan's book seems mistaken. Cultural studies works best when it is studying *something* – Hollywood, television, punk, Orientalism, madness, sexuality – and not when, as here, it is earnestly picking the fluff out of its own navel. And McGuigan seems a little jaded about all this settling of accounts himself. Certainly the writing perks up when he begins to grapple with new cases: the stand-off between Islamic and liberal fundamentalism in the *Satanic Verses* affair, for example, or the cultural and political ►

◀ implications of the 'new democracies' in eastern and central Europe.

McGuigan underemphasises the extent to which the re-evaluation of ordinary culture was a specifically *educational* strategy, a way of ventilating stuffy academic orthodoxies and introducing students to new ideas. But now teaching about popular culture has itself become an orthodoxy, it is perhaps time to give it a rest. McGuigan may have promised his publisher a primer in the study of popular culture, but he has written its obituary.

Turn on, tune in and be counted

David Graham

The Reactive Viewer

Barry Gunter & M. Wobor, John Libby, £18, 128pp

We are all prisoners of our origins. When television and television audience research started, the audience was imagined in the atypical terms – settling down, tea made, ready for the evening's entertainment. Audience research was interested in households, then in the number of people watching. Sitting in darkened rooms, rapt with the novelty of this pleasure, these early audiences posed no questions about attentiveness or 'quality'.

Forty years on, all that has changed. Now a television is, in the evocative phrase of the authors of *The Reactive Viewer*, a "talking lamp" – an unessential extra among the furnishings of a room. There may be quite a few "lamps" placed around the house, left on when a room is empty, wittering away to anything but 'couch potatoes'.

So audience research has created a simple currency based on huge aggregated numbers. 'Viewers' are all the people watching television at the same time; an 'audience' is all those watching one programme. Throughout its history, the dominance of this currency has been determined by one paymaster – the advertising agency. Through thick and thin, the agencies have preferred to trade in the old currency of gross numbers, and not to risk confusion by trading in anything else.

This book is the story of research's faltering attempts to catch up with the changes in television. Once it was realised that television was used and watched in different ways by different people, a demand arose for information about 'appreciation' – which programmes people loved and which they just tolerated – together with more knowledge of the infrastructure of viewing habits that might reveal why, for example, *Coronation Street* on Wednesday has a higher appreciation level but lower audience than on Monday. *The Reactive Viewer* is one of the few places where you can read about the AIs (Appreciation Indices), in which a limited number of people are asked to describe the programmes they have seen on a five-point scale, and find some of them published. Used by broadcasters for strategic planning, this project is now being expanded (just last month the Broadcasters' Audience Research Board began advertising for the contract for its new service).

However, as Gunter and Wobor point out, although broadcasters and advertisers

want research into television 'quality', the advertising agencies, who generate the huge sums needed to pay for continuous research, regard it as a confusing alternative currency which will make the buying and selling of advertisements more expensive and time-consuming. One faction within the industry has always tried to fight this stance by arguing that advertising is remembered and received better if it occurs around programmes the audience enjoys. But no such case has ever been proved, and some research, albeit inconclusive, even suggests that the programmes people enjoy most distract them, making advertising less effective. But when all is said and done, the message to the scheduler is clear: get a show that people know and like and run it for as long as possible. Predictability is the essence of success.

There is no such thing as 'pure' research into the television medium. The BARB project, which delivers ratings to the industry, is big business and costs some £8m to maintain and administer, most of it covered by the major subscribers, the advertising agencies, who pay according to their total annual billings. It is geared to the creation of what media buyers call the 'station average price': the price at which, over the last recorded month, each thousand 'impacts' (an 'impact' being a record of every time an individual sees an ad) was effectively purchased. Thus it forms the basis for the 'market' in media time. 'Qualitative' research, on the other hand, has been the preserve of ambitious research firms, hoping (and failing) to coin a new currency, public-service broadcasting authorities seeking to defend the case for public-service television, and channel planners looking for early warnings on the success or otherwise of their new programmes.

A television audience deserves research and consultation, and too few people in the business have been willing to do their homework. *The Reactive Viewer* contains all sorts of fascinating facts and figures about viewer reaction and does a good job of covering the ground.

Debating horror

Julian Petley

Horror

Marc Jancovich, Batsford, £9.99, 128pp

Nobody who endured the moral panic leading up to the imposition of the Video Recording Act in 1982 or who has experienced the ongoing persecution of horror-video enthusiasts by over-zealous policemen, trading-standards officers and customs officials could disagree with Marc Jancovich when he claims, in his introduction, that "the study of horror is important if only because claims about it have political effects... which extend far beyond the limits of the genre itself". Jancovich then introduces a range of theoretical notions from Bourdieu to Bakhtin, which one assumes he proposes to consider in relation to the genre, and promises to concentrate on examples drawn from popular culture which are not necessarily part of the usual series of classic or canonical texts.

Unfortunately, these expectations are not fulfilled. Jancovich's choice of texts is hardly non-canonical: films like *Night of the*



Gregory Peck and Billie Whitelaw frighten themselves into the horror canon in 'The Omen' (1976)

Living Dead, *The Exorcist*, *The Omen* and the work of Corman, King and Cronenberg are certainly part of popular culture, as the audience in the street will testify, but their presence in each and every recent book on horror surely places them firmly within the canon? Though Kim Newman's seminal *Nightmare Movies* is cited, none of the horror movies outside the Anglo-Saxon tradition is acknowledged. And for an author who claims to consider the popular, surely the omission of the 'Freddy' phenomenon, one of the key features of the 80s horror scene, is extraordinary, to say the least?

What would have been interesting here is an interrogation of the *process* of canonisation: how and why some texts are canonised and others not; what makes a cult movie?; how the canonisation process cuts through the work of individual writers, so that some of the work of, say, J. G. Ballard or Michael Moorcock is classed as 'science fiction' and some as 'literature'. Clearly what's also needed is at least an acknowledgment of the problems involved in defining 'the popular' – for example, how one generation's 'popular' movies or novels may well become the next generation's classics – and a consideration of how the terms 'popular' and 'canonical' are related.

Given that *Horror* fails to live up to its non-canonical promises, it could have perhaps redeemed itself by offering refreshing insights into its subjects. Unfortunately not. And Jancovich compounds this failure (and invites attack) by the way he sets himself up against what he calls "post-structuralist psychoanalytic criticism". This turns out to be a hotch-potch distilled from widely varying sources, though Jancovich presents it as a uniform position. Paradoxically, as Jancovich himself admits, it was thanks to structuralism and its legacy that popular forms such as horror were finally taken seriously and there was a long-overdue move away from the judgmental moralism which for so long passed for cultural criticism.

Jancovich does provide a substantial body of useful background and contextualising material, both biographical and sociological – for example in presenting the Gothic as a rejection of the ideology of the separation of the spheres of work and domestic life, 50s 'invasion' movies as a reflection of fears engendered by the effects of Fordism, recent horror films as a symptom of the 'post-modern' loss of a sense of personal and social identity – but pays little attention to the processes of mediation which turn ideas into cultural products. At worst we end up with a crude form of economic reductionism – exemplified in the section on *Dracula* – which is the kind of thing that gives film criticism a bad name.

It is disappointing to find no analysis of why horror movies evoke such wildly contradictory responses, with the same film often being praised as subversive and radical by one faction of society and condemned as reactionary and retrogressive by another. Or an investigation of 'effects' theory in the context of the horror genre. Original first-generation research into the effects of the media, long since discredited, has been replaced by an altogether more sophisticated and enlightened body of thought which takes account of different audiences, genres and artistic forms and in which the long-term *conceptual* effects of exposure to the media are studied, as

opposed to the short-term behavioural effects. Again the introduction nods in this direction, but Jancovich seems content to leave it at that.

Horror, by its nature, will never be respectable. It will always offend sensibilities and ruffle the establishment, while at the same time attracting passionate fans and serious study – perhaps it is this combination that makes it such an irresistible site for debate. Unfortunately this book, though it promises much, fails to add anything new. It also cries out for a competent sub-editor: I can't remember reading a book with so many errors – 'inherent', 'incompatible', 'fuedal', Stellan 'Kye' (for Rye), 'Dr. Mar-buse' and so on. The index even invents a new Romero film – *Dawn of the Undead!*

True stories from America

John Harkness

Voyages of Discovery:

The Cinema of Frederick Wiseman

Barry Keith Grant, University of Illinois Press, \$39.95 (hb), \$15.95 (pb), 266pp

Frederick Wiseman is obsessed with institutional reality and the impact on the humans contained within and beset by institutions – high schools, the police and courts, the welfare system, hospitals, the military. His documentaries, from the long-banned *Titicut Follies* to the six-hour epic, *Near Death*, map in painstaking detail the nature of American life. Working almost exclusively in black and white, removing the author's personality by refusing to add interior titles or voiceover narrations, Wiseman's films offer the magic of realism, honouring the individuals who must confront the institutions, while recoiling in horror from the institutions themselves. Is it really surprising that *Welfare*, his long study of an office serving the forgotten and indigent of American society, is currently being adapted as an opera?

But Wiseman's seemingly neutral gaze is not neutral at all. There are few directors in documentary or fiction film who display his ecstatic attachment to the human being under duress or whose images are so charged with meaning. Although his films are primarily exhibited on television, he is one of America's most important film-makers and deserving of book-length attention.

But in *Voyages of Discovery*, Barry Keith Grant writes in a tense we might call 'third-person impersonal'. It's a tense that afflicts dutiful graduate students who spend years being told to justify topics, footnote references, and never write a sentence that might look the least bit interesting. Grant has also been brushed by the wings of fashionable academic thought, so he worries about whether it is right to use an auteurist approach to discuss a documentary film-maker. Does this "risk privileging the personal vision over the film's historical contexts and 'the documentary tradition'"?

Well of course it does. Wiseman is one of the rare documentary directors who, whatever pro-filmic events are happening in front of the camera, has a style as instantly recognisable as Bergman's or Hitchcock's. Does Grant not realise that the best documentary film-makers all intervene in the

film-making process in their own way? If the personal vision is less important than the documentary tradition, then why do all the best documentary film-makers come up with their own private obsessions, from Flaherty's fascination with the ethnographic to Michael Rubbo's diary films. If Wiseman weren't distinctively individual, why would anybody write a book about him? The very question reveals that the point has been missed – Wiseman's individuality, anyone's individuality, transcends the institutional weight of tradition. That's what Wiseman's films are about.

Grant chatters on about the ideology of the texts and the dangers of "minimalising the historical real at the expense of the aesthetic artifice", but once he gets into the book proper, he drops his gestures towards deconstruction and semiotics and settles into a dogged and exhaustive account of the films themselves, loaded with footnotes. He organises his discussion thematically and thickens his text by citing all the right sources (though it may be time to give de Tocqueville a rest). The book is laced with the tiniest fragments of an interview he did with Wiseman (question: why didn't he transcribe the interview and include it?).

Grant has performed a service to film scholarship. We need a good book on Frederick Wiseman's extraordinary body of work. On the other hand, he's written a book that only an academic could read, and that no one could read with any pleasure. The function of the film critic is to point out things we've never noticed, to make connections we've never grasped, to make us stop short, and say, "Well, of course! Why didn't I see that before?"

The most unfortunate thing about *Voyages of Discovery* is that it isn't much of a voyage. It's more like a great trek with a guide who keeps indicating points of interest that everyone can see. How do Wiseman's films acquire their curious hypnotic power? Grant seems impotent in the face of *Near Death*, which is one of the greatest films I've ever seen. Wiseman's connection with the humanity of his subjects – the patients, doctors and families in the emergency and intensive-care wards of a hospital – creates such emotional intimacy that the viewer has no choice but to be caught up in the fragile value of human life. By fastening on the end of life, Wiseman honours its totality. Grant, however, has written a book which is unworthy of its subject.



Frederick Wiseman's bare black-and-white images convey an 'ecstatic' relationship to his subjects in *'Near Death' (1989)* and *'Welfare' (1975)*

Hidden in Plain Sight:

An Examination of the American Arts

Martin Williams, Oxford University Press, £17.50, 153pp

● The distinguished jazz critic argues that much of what is best in twentieth-century American culture is not taken seriously by the academy because it is popular. In a series of persuasive essays on film, stars, screenwriters, comic strips, jazz musicians and television, Williams presents his version of the American genius.

New Questions of British Cinema

Duncan Petrie (ed.), BFI, £9.95, 119pp

● This collection of papers on the financing, distribution, exhibition and marketing structures of British films comes in the wake of the collapse of the 'renaissance' of British cinema in the early 80s and the historic Downing Street seminar of 1990. Fact-packed and argumentative, with contributions from producers, academics, writers, researchers and film historians.

Brooklyn is Not Expanding:

Woody Allen's Comic Universe

Annette Wernblad, Associated University Press, £22.50, 164pp

● Wernblad investigates the Allen *shlemiel* persona as incarnated in his stand-up Heywood Allen routines through all the films up to *Crimes and Misdemeanours* in 1989, with detailed plot descriptions and lots of retelling of jokes. From *Sleeper* (1973): Miles to Luna explaining that he hasn't had sex for 200 years adds "204 if you count my marriage". But there is no attempt to invade Allen's private life.

Steven Spielberg

Philip M. Taylor, B. T. Batsford Ltd, £12.99, 176pp

● An accessible but intelligent account of the man who describes himself as a *movie-maker*, not a *film-maker*. Spielberg's lack of critical success (Derek Malcolm described *E.T.* as being "as profound as a cow pat") as opposed to his huge commercial success is ascribed to his self-confessed inability to make films that deal with the 'dark side'. The story behind every film up to *Always* (1989) plus analysis and description.

Garbo on Garbo

Sven Broman, Bloomsbury, £16.99, 266pp

● Described as "the closest thing to an autobiography there will ever be" of the reclusive star, based on letters dating from the 30s and 40s from Garbo to her Swedish friend Horke, Countess Wachtmeister of Tistad, and on verbatim conversations with Broman, who first met Garbo in 1985. Garbo left Hollywood, which she loathed, after making the disappointing *Two-Faced Woman* in 1941 for George Cukor, but her correspondence reveals little detail about her legendary decision to retire. Thoughts about making a comeback in 1945 came to nothing and what comes over is a great sense of weariness and nagging homesickness for Sweden. Good photographs.

Film-Video Terms and Concepts

Steven Browne, Focal Press, £20, 181pp

● A totally useful book, especially for film and video students but also for anyone confused by or curious about the impenetrable technical jargon of the production process. An A-Z of production and post-production terms with symbols indicating whether the term is video- or film-related. From A/B roll to zoom lens, the entries are defined and often illustrated with photographs, charts and diagrams.

REVIEWS

Reviews, synopses and full credits for all the month's new films and new British TV films

Boomerang

USA 1992

Director: Reginald Hudlin

Certificate
15
Distributor
UIP
Production Company
Paramount Pictures
Executive Producer
Mark Lipsky
Producers
Brain Grazer
Warrington Hudlin
Co-producers
Barry W. Blaustein
David Sheffield
Associate Producer
Ray Murphy Jnr
Production Supervisor
Grace Blake
Production Office
Co-ordinator
Betty Chin
Unit Production Managers
Steven Rose
Johnathan Filley
Casting
Aleta Chappelle
Voice:
Barbara Harris
Assistant Directors
Joseph Ray
Randy N. Barbee
Richard Baratta
Amy Herman
William Jennings
Roni Wheeler-Poole
2nd Unit:
Tom Lisi
Screenplay
Barry W. Blaustein
David Sheffield
Story
Eddie Murphy
Director of Photography
Woody Omens
Colour
Technicolor;
Prints by Deluxe
Additional Photography
Peter Deming
Richard Quinlan
Aerial Photography
Don Sweeny
Camera Operators
Craig Di Bona
Richard Kratina
Additional:
Alec Hirschfield
Stedcam Operators
Larry McConkey
Ted Churchill

Video Playback Operator
Joe Trammell
Editors
Earl Watson
Film:
John Carter
Michael Jablow
Production Designer
Jane Musky
Art Director
William Barclay
Set Design
Marion S. Kolsby
Set Decorator
Alan Hicks
Scenic Artists
Richard Ventre
Patricia Walker
William Sohmer
Special Effects Supervisor
Steve Kirshoff
Music
Marcus Miller
Music Extracts
"String Quartet in G, Opus 54, No. 1-Third Movement" by Franz Joseph Haydn, performed by The Aeolian Quartet
Music Supervisor
Bill Stephney
Music Editor
Katherine Quittner
Songs
"Tonight Is Right" by Babyface, L. A. Reid, Daryl Simmons, performed by Keith Washington; "7 Day Weekend" by Dallas Austin, Grace Jones, Satch; "Atomic Dog" by George Clinton, Gary Shider, David Spradley, performed by George Clinton; "End of the Road" by Babyface, L. A. Reid, Daryl Simmons, performed by Boyz II Men; "It's Gonna Be Alright" by Scott Parker, Louis Brown, Charlie Wilson, performed by Aaron Hall, featuring Charlie Wilson; "Feel Like Funkin' It Up" by and performed by Rebirth Brass Band; "Feels Like

Heaven" by Kenny Vaughan, performed by Kenny Vaughan and the Art of Love; "Reversal of a Dog" by L. A. Reid, Babyface, Daryl Simmons, Lisa Lopes, Melvin Davis, performed by The LaFace Cartel; "Pull Up to the Bumper" by Sly Dunbar, Robbie Shakespeare, Dana Manno; "Bewildered" by Leonard Whitcup, Teddy Powell, performed by James Brown; "Don't Wanna Love You" by Babyface, L. A. Reid, Daryl Simmons, performed by Shanie Wilson; "Fesarius Approaches", "Magic Tears" by Fred Steiner; "Love Shoulda Brought You Home" by Bo Watson, Babyface, Daryl Simmons, performed by Toni Braxton; "There U Go" by Babyface, L. A. Reid, Daryl Simmons, performed by Johnny Gill; "Man's Final Frontier" by Todd Thomas, Timothy Barnwell, performed by Arrested Development; "I'll Die Without You" by Attrel Cordes, performed by P. M. Dawn; "Give U My Heart" by Bo Watson, Babyface, L. A. Reid, Daryl Simmons, performed by Toni Braxton, Babyface
Costume Design
Francine Jamison-Tanchuck
Wardrobe
Supervisors:
Jennifer L. Bryan
Mary Coleman-Gierczak
Walter Rivera
Eddie Murphy:
Fetteroff F. Colon
Loring Spicer
Make-up Artists
Toy Russell-Van Lierop
Eddie Murphy:
Bernadine M. Anderson
Tony Lloyd
Additional:
Roosevelt Madison Jnr
Ellie Winslow
Title Design
Robert Dawson

Titles/Opticals
Cinema Research Corporation
Supervising Sound Editor
Randle Akerson
Sound Editors
Richard Burton
Trevor Jolly
David Spence
Dialogue:
James Matheny
Sean Callery
Supervising Dialogue/ADR Editor
Bobby Mackston
Foley Editor
Scott D. Jackson
Sound Recordists
Russell Williams II
ADR:
Bob Baron
Foley:
Greg Curda
Dolby stereo
Consultant:
Douglas Greenfield
Sound Re-recordists
Bob Litt
Greg Russell
Elliot Tyson
Foley Artists
David Lee Fein
Ken Dufva
Technical Advisers
Darryl Henley
Eric Ramsey
Production Assistants
Stephanie Denise Smith
Veronica Johnson
Paul Deo
Toussaint Kotright
Taudin Hakein
Debbie Cottle
Daphne Tsantillis
Diallo McLinn
Sandra Maria Stevenson
Tracey Kemble
Colin Cumberbatch
Linda Wilson
Sarah Redd
Holly Halloran
William James Jnr
Katreniah Washington
Lisa Jean Ortiz
Orville Bennett
Shirelene Neale
Fern Renata Smith
Anita Gibson
André B. Blake
Jeffrey Woodton
Michele Ali
Lisa Payne
Margaret Craven
Ann Marie J. Bryan
DeAnthony Darnell
George Norfleet Jnr
Shelley Shepard
Kenny Blank

Cast
Eddie Murphy
Marcus Graham
Robin Givens
Jacqueline
Halle Berry
Angela
David Alan Grier
Gerard
Martin Lawrence
Tyler
Grace Jones
Strangé
Geoffrey Holder
Nelson
Eartha Kitt
Christie
Eloise
Chris Rock
Bony T
Tisha Campbell
Yvonne
Lela Rochon
Christie
John Witherspoon
Mr Jackson
Bebe Drake-Massey
Mrs Jackson
John Canada Terrell
Todd
Leonard Jackson
Chemist
Jonathan P. Hicks
Lady Eloise's Butler
Irv Dotten
Box Office Clerk
Tom Mardrosian
Salesman
Melvin Van Peebles
Editor
Rhonda Jensen
Waitress
Alyce Webb
Noreen
Louise Vient
Woman from Holland
Frank Rivers
Husband
Angela Logan
Wife
Chuck Pfeifer
French Businessman
Raye Dowell
Pretty Receptionist
Reginald Hudlin
Warrington Hudlin
Street Hustlers
André Blake
Waiter
Kenny Blank
Kenny
Khanya Khizhe
Khanya
Chris Rowland
Erica Catherine Smith
De'Von Young
Kids
Daryl "Chill" Mitchell
Gene "Groove" Allen
Street Photographers
Naydia Sanford
Michelle Griffin
Jewel Allison Gittens
Kissable Girls
Frank Tarsia
Ronald Edward Ziegler
Scott Baird
Jeff McBride
Strange's Escorts
Herb Kerr
Strange's Photographer
Al Cerullo
Helicopter Pilot
Gary Frith
Sandy Moore
Ushers
Olga Merediz
Guard
Tracy Douglas
Attractive Woman
10,502 feet
117 minutes

Marcus Graham, marketing executive for a New York cosmetics firm, prides himself on his way with women, especially if they can help him rise further up the corporate ladder. He meets his match, however, once his company merges with a French rival, and the stunning Jacqueline becomes his immediate boss. She never goes out with work colleagues, she tells him, though they arrange an uneventful dinner date on the same night that Marcus' friend Gerard makes a successful foray with one of the firm's art directors, the sensitive Angela.

Marcus eventually beds Jacqueline



In love with the man: Halle Berry, Eddie Murphy

during a sales convention in New Orleans, but, taking a leaf out of his own book, she obstinately refuses any serious relationship. Showing signs of jealousy, Angela warns Jacqueline that her cavalier treatment of Marcus is affecting his work. To prove the point, Marcus allows Nelson, his wayward commercials director, to indulge his genius unfettered in a campaign to promote Strangé, a fragrance named after an international supermodel with her own designs on Marcus. The commercial proves a disaster.

During an enforced holiday, Marcus visits the art class Angela organises for local children. Their relationship grows after a Thanksgiving dinner with Gerard and his embarrassingly vulgar parents. Though his own affair with Angela has cooled, Gerard is still affronted that she should get involved with such a ladies' man. Marcus, meanwhile, still finds himself drawn to Jacqueline, who continues to blow hot and cold. Angela eventually abandons him, and leaves the company for a high-flying job at another cosmetics firm. During sex with Jacqueline, Marcus finally realises the depth of his feelings for Angela. At first she refuses to see him, but soon succumbs and a combative life together is assured.

Eddie Murphy enters *Boomerang* pleased as punch in a chic red jacket – a marketing executive marching through adoring minions at his New York cosmetics firm. He appears just as smug by the time the film dribbles to a close, some two hours later, after a story ostensibly designed to show his character's ego cut down to size. In practice, every woman, from Robin Givens' ice-cold siren to Eartha Kitt's eccentric predator, finds Murphy's character irresistible. Givens adds fuel to the fire by calling him "incredibly talented". Right on cue, director Reginald Hudlin – jumping into the Hollywood mainstream after the low-budget *House Party* – dutifully cuts to the star attraction, preening.

Murphy's laid-back delivery helps to make his Lothario a peculiarly unsympathetic hero. Matters are made worse by a piecemeal plot that deters audience involvement, some dangerously loose editing, and the lack of any irony in the portrayal of Marcus' glamorous universe. Cosmetics, chic Manhattan pads, endless designer clothing: the film seems to take place entirely inside the advertising pages of some glossy magazine.

Murphy grabs hold of the script's scanty opportunities for physical comedy; he performs an impressive imitation orgasm, and punctuates lines with his trademark barking laugh. But flashes of the irreverent rising star from *Beverly Hills Cop* only emphasise how bland a performer Murphy is becoming. To be fair, *Boomerang* contributes a few neat digs at racial relations, deliberately pushing white characters off-screen or portraying them as foolish menials. Sexism, however, appears as triumphant as ever.

Geoff Brown

Buffy the Vampire Slayer

USA 1992

Director: Fran Rubel Kuzui

Certificate
12

Distributor
20th Century Fox
Production Company
20th Century Fox
A Sandollar/Kuzui Enterprises production
Executive Producers
Sandy Gallin
Carol Baum
Fran Rubel Kuzui
Producers
Kaz Kuzui
Howard Rosenman
Co-producer
Dennis Stuart Murphy
Associate Producer
Alex Butler
Production Co-ordinator
Elizabeth Ervin
Unit Production Manager
David Witz
Location Manager
Rick Rothen
Post-production Supervisor
Helene Mulholland
Post-production Co-ordinator
Linda Hempling
Candib

2nd Unit Directors
Terry J. Leonard
Additional
Photography Unit:
Freddie Hice

Casting
Johanna Ray
Associate:
Elaine Huzzar
Voice:
Barbara Harris
Extras:
CD Casting
Assistant Directors
Josh King
Marcei Brubaker
Trey Batchelor
Richard Brodsky
Additional
Photography Unit:
Harvey Waldman
Jennifer Kingry

Screenplay
Joss Whedon
Director of Photography
James Hayman

Colour
Deluxe
Additional Photography
Tim Suhrstedt
Camera Operators
Peter Norman
Additional
Photography Unit:
Philip Carr Forster

Steadicam Operators
Mark O'Kane
Paul Taylor
Video Sequences
Sam Hurwitz
Editors
Camilla Toniolo
Jill Savitt
Additional:
Richard Candib

Production Designer
Lawrence Miller
Art Directors
James Barrows
Randy Moore
Art Department
Co-ordinator
Mike Kraft
Set Decorator
Claire Brown

On-set Dresser
Rocky Slaymaker
Head Scenics
Claudia Ivanjack
2nd:
Tom Ivanjack

Scenics
Phillip Barnes

Andy Chilcoat
Tami Chilcoat
Walter Lucas
Tom O'Brien
Tony Riedell
Storyboard Artist
Robb Bihun
Special Effects
Joseph Mercurio
Mechanical Effects Foreman
Vince Montefusco
Music
Carter Burwell
Executive Music Producer
Ralph Sall
Music Editors
Steve McCroskey
J.J. George

Songs
"Keep It Comin' (Dance 'til U Can't Dance No More)" by Robert Clivilles, David Cole, Anthony Quiles, Duran Ramos, performed by C&C Music Factory; "Little Heaven" by Dean Dinning, Randel Guss, Todd Nichols, Glen Phillips, performed by Toad the Wet Sprocket; "I Fought the Law" by Sonny Curtis, performed by Mary's Danish; "Silent City" by and performed by Matthew Sweet; "Light Comes Out of Black" by Rob Halford, performed by Rob Halford, Pantera; "Zap City" by Ian Asbury, Billy Duffy, performed by The Cult; "Party with the Animals" by Ozzy Osbourne, Zakk Wylde, Randy Castillo, performed by Ozzy Osbourne; "I Ain't Gonna Eat Out My Heart Anymore" by Pam Sawyer, Laurie Burton, performed by The DiVyns; "Man Smart, Woman Smarter" by King Radio, performed by Dream Warriors; "We Close Our Eyes" by Danny Elfman, performed by Susanna Hoffs

Cheerleader Choreography
Lisa Estrada
Costume Design
Marie France
Wardrobe Supervisor
Jered Edd Green
Costumers
Ed Fincher
Garet Reilly
Sharon Rosenberg
Nancy Steiner

Make-up
Key:
Michelle Buhler
Artists:
Thomas E. Suprenant
Angela Margolis
Donald Sutherland:
Ann Brodie

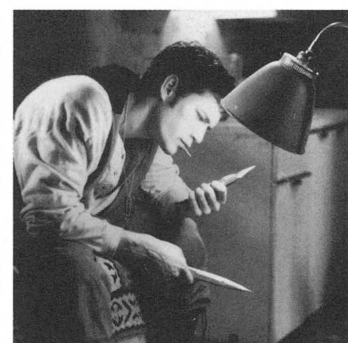
Special Make-up Effects
William Forsche
Mark Maitre
Title Design
Poetic Justice
Titles/Opticals
Cinema Research Corporation
Supervising Sound Editor
Gary S. Gerlich
Sound Editors
Harry Snodgrass

Elliott L. Koretz
William Jacobs
Hal Sanders
Pieter S. Hubbard
Jimmy Ling
Teri E. Dorman
Tim Board
Supervising ADR Editor
Holly Huckins
ADR Editors
Laura Graham
Vickie Sampson
Sound Recordists
Steve Aaron
Robert Renga
Additional
Photography Unit:
Glen Berkovitz
ADR Recordist
Brad Brock
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists
Sergio Reyes
Chris David
Production Assistants
Office:
Matt Bilski
Eddie Simbana
Set:
Jeffrey Buhler
Ross Katz
Ed Allen
Sean Corrigan
Art Department:
J.P. Bernardo
Lisa Ferguson
Stunt Co-ordinators
Terry J. Leonard
Additional
Photography Unit:
Freddie Hice
Stunts
Steve Boyum
Eddie Braun
Michele Chong
Steve Davison
Jeff L. Jensen
Pat E. Johnson
Terry J. Leonard
James Lew
Mike McGaughy
R.A. Rondell
John-Clay Scott
Michael Watson
Buffy:
Jani Davis
Donna Evans
Cynthia Kerr
Lisa Ratzin
Heather Ryan
Martial Arts Trainers
Pat E. Johnson
James Lew

Cast
Kristy Swanson
Buffy
Donald Sutherland
Merrick
Paul Reubens
Amilyn
Rutger Hauer
Lothos
Luke Perry
Pike

Michele Abrams
Jennifer
Hilary Swank
Kimberly
Paris Vaughan
Nicole
David Arquette
Benny
Randall Batinkoff
Jeffrey
Andrew Lowery
Andy
Sasha Jensen
Grueller
Stephen Root
Gary Murray
Candy Clark
Buffy's Mom
Natasha Gregson Wagner
Cassandra
Mark DeCarlo
Coach
Tom James
Zeph
James Paradise
Buffy's Dad
David Sherrill
Knight
Liz Smith
Reporter
Paul M. Lane
Robert Berman
Toby Holguin
Vampire Fan
Eurlene Epper-Woldman
Graveyard Woman
Andre Warren
Newscaster
Bob "Swanie" Swanson
Referee
Erika Dittner
Cheerleader
J.C. Cole
Biker
Tony Maxwell
Tarra Greenhut
Students
Michael S. Kopelow
Timid Student
Jaime Seibert
Deep Student
Ricky Dean Logan
Bloody Student
Anthony Haynes
Unidentified Schoolboy
Bobby Aldridge
Amanda Anka
Chino Binamo
Al Goto
Terry Jackson
Mike Johnson
Sarah Lee Jones
Kim Robert Kosci
Clint Lilley
Chi-Muoi Lo
Jimmy N. Roberts
David Rowden
Kenny Sacha
Ben R. Scott
Kurtis Epper Sanders
Sharon Schaffer
Lincoln Simonds
Vampires

8,460 feet
94 minutes



A way with wood: Luke Perry

assisted by Buffy, who has finally decided to accept her destiny. In the process, she has alienated all her old friends by showing less interest in the up-coming seniors' dance than in vampire-slaying techniques.

In a confrontation, Lothos exerts his power of fascination over Buffy and she hesitates crucially, allowing the vampire to kill Merrick. Buffy and Pike both go to the seniors' dance, which is invaded by the massed vampires. Buffy is lured away by Lothos and disposes of Amilyn, while Pike resists the hordes led by his former friend. Lothos offers Buffy immortality, but she resists him and drives a stake through his heart.

The first of an up-coming wave of vampire movies, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* resembles a higher-budgeted, but still relatively cheapskate, version of the bloodsucking nerd comedies that bypass theatrical distribution and head straight for video: *Once Bitten*, *My Best Friend Is a Vampire*, *Beverly Hills Vamp*, *Teen Vamp*. Oddly, the most effective element of the film is its parody of the California life style, in which a New Age basketball coach gives a pep talk that concludes, "Remember, you have to make a statement, 'I have a right to the ball'".

Although blonde Kristy Swanson is insufficiently air-headed before her transformation into an acrobatic super-heroine for the change to be amusing or interesting, the supporting cast is surprisingly strong. Luke Perry makes an endearing impact as the oil-stained prole who replaces Buffy's obnoxious boyfriend; Donald Sutherland tries hard to seem serious as the plot-explaining slayer-trainer; and Paul Reubens (unrecognisable from his Pee-Wee Herman days) does a remarkable job with the insignificant role of the chief disciple, his sarcastic death scene being funny enough to warrant a reprise under the end titles.

However, the film is hurt by a basic indecision about its tone, which seems to have prompted a rethink during the editing stage. This hurts the story by omitting one key scene – Pike's turning the tables on Benny and his rallying of the partygoers against the vampires, which now takes place off-screen and isn't even referred to in the dialogue. But the chief casualty of this nervousness is Rutger Hauer as a lisping, English-accented King Vampire, a fey and self-mocking performance ill-served by an especially feeble death scene.

Kim Newman

The Crying Game

United Kingdom 1992

Director: Neil Jordan

Certificate

18

Distributor

Mayfair

Production Companies

Palace/
Channel Four Films
In association with
Eurotrustees/Nippon
Film Development
& Finance Inc.

With the participation
of British Screen

Executive Producer

Nik Powell

Producer

Stephen Woolley

Co-producer

Elizabeth Karlsen

Associate Producer

Paul Cowan

Production Co-ordinators

Fran Triefus

Ireland:

Fiona Traynor

Production Manager

Ireland:

Gemma Fallon

Location Managers

Terry Blyther

Re-shoot:

Gilly Case

Ireland:

Martin O'Malley

Post-production

Supervisor

Amanda Posey

Casting

Susie Figgis

Assistant Directors

Redmond Morris

Melvin Lind

Jonathan Karlsen

Ireland:

Seamus Collins

Robert Quinn

Screenplay

Neil Jordan

Director of Photography

Ian Wilson

In colour

Camera Operator

Ian Wilson

Editor

Kant Pan

Production Designer

Jim Clay

Art Director

Chris Seagers

Set Decorator

Martin Childs

Special Effects Supervisor

Peter Hutchinson

Prosthetics

Daniel Parker

Music

Anne Dudley

Music Performed by

The Pro Arte Orchestra

of London

Orchestrations

Anne Dudley

Songs

"When a Man Loves a

Woman" by Cameron

Lewis, Arthur Wright,

performed by Percy

Sledge; "Baby Jump" by

Ray Dorset, performed

by Mungo Jerry; "Live

for Today" by and

performed by Cicero;

"Second Coming" by

and performed by

Simon Boswell; "The

Crying Game" by Geoff

Stephens, performed

by (1) Kate Robbins, (2)

Dave Berry, (3) Boy

George; "I Only Wanna

be With You" by Mike

Hawker, Ivor

Raymonde, performed

by Kate Robbins; "The

White Cliffs Of Dover"

by Nat Burton, Walter

Kent, performed by The

Blue Jays; "Let the

Music Play" by Chris

Barbaros, Ed Chisholm,

performed by Carol

Thompson; "Stand by

Your Man" by Tammy

Wynette, Billy Sherrill,

performed by Lyle

Lovett

Costume Design

Sandy Powell

Wardrobe Supervisors

Paul Minter

Clare Sprague

Make-up Artist

Morag Ross

Titles

The Optical

Partnership

Supervising Sound Editor

Eddy Joseph

Sound Editor

Dialogue:

Rick Dunford

Foley Editor

Victor Nunes

Sound Recordists

Colin Nicolson

Music:

Roger Dudley

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recorder

Robin O'Donoghue

Stunt Co-ordinator

Clive Curtis

Stunt Doubles

Helen Cauldwell

Abbi Collins

Elaine Ford

Stand-ins

Steve Morpew

Marilyn Took

Cast

Forest Whitaker

Jody

Miranda Richardson

Jude

Stephen Rea

Fergus

Adrian Dunbar

Maguire

Brefinni McKenna

Tinker

Joe Savino

Eddie

Birdie Sweeney

Tommy

Jaye Davidson

Dil

André Bernard

Jane

Jim Broadbent

Col

Ralph Brown

Dave

Tony Slattery

Deveroux

Jack Carr

Franknum

Josephine White

Shar Campbell

Bar Performers

Brian Coleman

Judge

Ray De-Haan

David Cronnelly

Security Men

10,043 feet

112 minutes

Jody, a black British soldier in Armagh, is picked up by Jude, a young woman who turns out to be a member of an IRA group; they kidnap him and hold him hostage in a greenhouse, to be exchanged for one of their members. Fergus, Jude's lover, is given the task of guarding Jody, and the two men strike up a rapport, to the disapproval of the group leader, Maguire. Jody shows Fergus a picture of Dil, his girlfriend in London, and tells him to look after her.

Maguire announces that Jody is to be shot, and Fergus requests the job of executing him. In the woods, Fergus allows Jody to escape, but the soldier is run over by a British tank as troops arrive to destroy the camp. Fergus escapes to London and, calling himself Jimmy, tracks down Dil and has his hair cut by her in the salon where she works. After meeting her in the Metro bar, where she sometimes sings, he follows her home and intervenes in a fight between her and her ex-lover Dave.

Fergus and Dil tentatively start to become lovers, but he is horrified to discover that she is really a male transvestite. After Dil has visited Fergus on the building site where he is now working, their relationship resumes. But Fergus receives a visit from Jude, who tells him that he has been court-martialled by the IRA, and is required for a suicide mission, to kill a judge outside a brothel. Fergus cuts Dil's hair, dresses him in Jody's old cricket clothes, and takes him to a hotel to hide out.

Distraught, Dil gets drunk. Fergus takes him back to his own flat, where he confesses that he knew Jody, and explains the circumstances. As he sleeps, Dil ties him to the bed. With Fergus held by Dil at gunpoint, Maguire himself shoots the judge and is killed, while Jude escapes. When Jude comes to the flat, Dil shoots her and is about to kill himself, but Fergus stops him. Fergus is arrested, and Dil comes to visit him in prison.

Neil Jordan's latest film begins and ends with its hero telling a story about a scorpion, illustrating a point about all things finally adhering to their true nature. Between the two tellings – the first time to Jody in captivity, the second time with Fergus himself in captivity, in circumstances recalling the ever-quotable ending of Bresson's *Pickpocket* – Fergus discovers his own ethical and sexual nature. But the film could also be taken as an enquiry into the true nature of a Neil Jordan film. Apart from the way it shifts mode a quarter of the way through – from opened-out intimate theatre to urban sexual fantastic – it also conflates elements of pretty much all Jordan's work, and finally provides a thread that makes his diverse, occasionally directionless *oeuvre* seem like a coherent overall project.

The hangdog presence of Stephen Rea, here both penitent and avenger, takes us back to the IRA scenario of *Angel*; his role as secret protector and pursuer of a deceptive love object



Theatre of transformations: Jaye Davidson, Stephen Rea

echoes the Bob Hoskins role in *Mona Lisa*, and the androgynous black actor Jaye Davidson is not coincidentally a dead ringer for that film's Cathy Tyson. Add to these the themes of metamorphosis and 'true nature' revealed (*The Company of Wolves* and Jordan's novel *The Dream of a Beast*); the disguised hero hiding in a community – the Metro bar, a parody of East End conviviality – as in *We're No Angels*; and the opening fairground setting recalling *The Miracle*. As a tentative return to roots, that last film might be seen as a run-up to this one, which relates in a more complex, even neurotic way to Jordan's identity as an Irish film-maker.

The foregoing inventory may suggest too self-conscious an attempt to find an identity, but that fits the theme. En route to becoming himself, Fergus finds that supposedly inherent identity is not all: a provisional, invented one is a real alternative. It is no accident that the film's most immediate performance, the one that most suggests an integrated personality rather than the composites and masks of other characters, is Forest Whitaker's, an American actor playing a West Indian from Tottenham. It is Jody who sums up the film's theme of perceived identities and their naming, when he remarks of his posting, "I get sent to the one place where they call you nigger to your face".

The film is riddled with invented or mythical identities, from Fergus' transformation into 'Jimmy', the all-purpose Irish expatriate, to the sleek new face that Jude dons in London (much is made of her dressing in front of a three-piece mirror), to the cricket whites in which Jody appears to Fergus as a ghost, and in which his 'real' personality (his *spirit*) resides. Fergus' revelation is not that he is 'really' homosexual, but that sexuality must adapt to the demands of love in a loveless world.

The commonplace explanation that Dil is actually a woman in a man's body is open to question: his/her invented persona is neither true nor false. This

fundamental indeterminateness surfaces when Fergus 'disguises' Dil as a man, truly making a travesty: a sexually complex adult turned into a sexless pantomime boy (Fergus crops Dil's hair just as Dil had cut his; Dil responds, "I don't recognise myself"). Dil's identity to his/her self is finally no more or less real than Jimmy's in relation to Fergus: the irony being that Jimmy is recalled to his real identity by a disguised Jude.

The theatre for these transformations is a Tottenham no less fantastic than the hell of *Mona Lisa*: a caricature 'elsewhere' populated by brutish monsters, and whose inner circle is the Metro, presided over by Col, a satanically omniscient, albeit benevolent Mine Host. It is only in this unreal air that the story's oppositions, parallels and fanciful twists make sense. That they do is due to Jordan's drastic turn from political thriller to redemption drama. All these elements become functional as paradoxes, as stations on Fergus' road. What is not easily accounted for, though, is the off-hand way in which Jordan treats themes usually assumed to demand the realistic, analytical approach.

There is a real sense in which the film is open to accusations of triviality, in presenting sexual, racial and political differences as almost interchangeable versions of otherness. Can the melodramatic ending genuinely resolve the unanswered political questions of the beginning, or does the terrorist theme simply serve to lead us into a personal drama? What saves the film is the conviction and density with which its parallels and paradoxes are elaborated. Even the final, rather obvious joke fits satisfyingly, as over the credits, Lyle Lovett's unmistakably male voice sings Tammy Wynette's dictum, "Sometimes it's hard to be a woman". That this comes across as a neatly ironic summing-up rather than a mere *reductio ad absurdum* punch-line suggests that there may finally be as much going on here as meets the eye.

Jonathan Romney

Danzón

Spain 1991

Director: Maria Novaro

Certificate
(Not yet issued)

Distributor
Metro Pictures

Production Companies
Instituto Mexicano
Cinematografía/
Macondo Cine Video/
Fondo de Fomento
a la Calidad
Cinematografía/
Televisión
Española/Tabasco
Films/Gobierno del
Estado de Veracruz

Executive Producer
Dulce Kuri

Producer
Jorge Sanchez

Associate Producer
Miguel Necoechea

Production Manager
Tlacateotl Mata

Assistant Directors
Moises Ortiz Urquidí
Pablo Gomez Saenz

Screenplay
Beatriz Novaro
Maria Novaro

Director of Photography
Rodrigo Garcia
In colour

Editors
Nelson Rodriguez
Maria Novaro

Additional:
Sigfrido Barjau

Art Directors
Marisa Pecarlins
Norberto Sanchez-
Mejorada

Songs
"Lagrimas Negras"
by Miguel Matamoros,
performed by Danzonera
Dimas; "Alejandra," "El
Acahual," Mi Vida por
un Danzon" by Felipe
Pérez, "Mujer Perjura"
by Miguel Campanioni,
performed by Danzonera
Dimas; "Viajera" by Luis
Arcaraz, M. Molina
Montes, performed
by Luis Arcaraz & his
Orchestra; "Agüita de
Coco," "Yo No Bailo Con
Juana" performed by
Pepe Luis & Orquesto
Universitaria; "Schubert
Serenade" by Franz
Schubert, "Massacre"
by A. Valdez, performed
by Accerina & his
Danzonera; "Azul"
by Agustín Lara,
performed by La voz
de Chiapas, Carmen
Salinas, Etando Gonzales;
"Amor Perdido" by Pedro
Flores, performed
by M. Luisa Landin;
"El Coquera" by Agustín
Lara, performed by Ana
Ma Fernández;
"Matamaja" by Dominio
Publico, performed by
Alma de Stoavento;
"Veracruz," "Mujer" by
Agustín Lara, performed
by The Voice of Chiapas;
"Antonietta" by and
performed by Erando
Gonzalez; "Zorba the
Greek" by Mikis
Theodorakis, performed
by Erando Gonzalez;
"Como Fue" by Ernesto
Duarte, performed by
Beny Moré; "Telefono
a larga Distancia" by
Aniceto Diaz, "La Mora"
performed by Manzanita
y el son 4; "Pour Toi"
by and performed
by Agustín Lara

Wardrobe
Monica Neumaier

Make-up
Esther Alvarez

Sound Recordist
Nerio Barberis

Sound Re-recordist
Jorge Romo

Production Assistants
Adriana Parada

Cast
Eduardo Corona
Paula Rodriguez
Subtitles
Titiravideo, Mexico

Cast
Maria Rojo
Julia
Carmen Salinas
Doña Ti
Blanca Guerra
La Colorada
Tito Vasconcelos
Susy
Victor Carpinteiro
Rubén
Margarita Isabel
Silvia
Cheli Godinez
Tere
Daniel Rergis
Carmelo
Adyari Chazaro
Perla
Martha Navarro
Bruja
Cesar Sobrevals
Chucho
Mikhail Kaminin
Martínero Ruso
Rodrigo Gomez
Mulato
Sergio Colmenares
Karla
Angel del Valle
Yadita
Luis Gerardo
Juan El Padrote
Ines Jacome
Victoria
Emiliano Guerra
Bebé de la Colorada
"Chato" Cejudo
El Güerito
Felipe Perez "Dimas"
Conductor
Nicolas Castro
Cocinero
Juan Hernandez
Official
Ruben Benitez
Martinez Official
"Indio" Mendoza
Master of Ceremonies
Javier Molina
Teperochito
Rosario Gonzalez
Chato Reyes
Old Couple in
the Parque Zamota
Miguelito
Maletero
Norma Leyva
Woman with Baby
Claudia Rodriguez
Rocio Rodriguez
Women
Roberto Ortiz Lozano

Adolfo Aldana
Carlos Catalan
Mike del Villar
Men in Los Angeles Club
Santos de la Vega
Man at Bar
Licia Suarez
Telephonist
Carmelita
Solo Dancer
Hortencia Tapia
Enrique Tapia
Francis Arellano
Antonia Arellano
Rosario Flores
José Platas
Guillermina Riojan
Juan Riojan
Lina Roanova
Jorge Moreno
Lourdes Torres
Emma Ruth Mendez
José Duran
Ma. Eugenia Espinoza
Jaime Gutierrez
Rosa Ma. Curiel
Jorge Martinez
Irma Castoreno
Dancers
Maestro José Platas
Master of Maria Rojo
Dance

8,640 feet
96 minutes

Subtitles

Julia lives alone with her daughter Perla in Mexico City and both work as telephone operators. Her passion for dancing takes Julia to the Colonia dance hall, where she has been meeting Carmelo twice a week for the last ten years. He is a tall, charming man, as well as an excellent dancer with whom Julia has already won several competitions. But one day, Carmelo fails to turn up at the Colonia. At first, Julia thinks it is because he has a cold, but when he is absent on subsequent nights, she becomes concerned.

One night, she overhears a conversation between friends which explains Carmelo's disappearance: he has been accused of theft and, although cleared, he has fled the capital. Julia resolves to take time off work and travel to the port of Veracruz in search of him. She books a room in a cheap hotel and, on one of her walks round town, befriends a transvestite cabaret artist who wants to learn the *danzón*. On another trip to the docks, she meets Rubén, a young sailor whose tugboat is aptly named "See Me and Suffer". They have a brief, passionate affair.

Julia begins to enjoy the bracing company of her new acquaintances, dresses in a more extrovert fashion, and revels in her temporary sense of freedom. She fails to find Carmelo, however, and soon has to return to Mexico City. She meets her friends and daughter and appears fresh and relaxed. They all go to the Colonia, where Julia is in the middle of a dance when Carmelo suddenly and quietly turns up. Without exchanging a word, they start to dance the *danzón*. Breaking the dance's sober rules, which discourage excessive eye contact, they gaze into each other's eyes.

There is a pleasing reversal of convention in Maria Novaro's subtle, engaging study of a working woman's voyage of self-discovery. Traditionally, dance films (particularly those that come from the Spanish-speaking world) emphasise the liberating physicality of the dance floor in unlocking the inhibited protagonist: the clack of the castanet as the key to heat, passion

and love unlimited. The *danzón*, loosely translated as 'refined ballroom dance', is a different matter, however: a dance of restraint and elegance, not to be cheapened by displays of ersatz emotion and obvious sexuality. As Julia explains to her transvestite friend, in what amounts to a confrontation between classicism and camp, it is a simple dance in which each partner concentrates on completing a perfect square of steps. The emotional charge should be 'soft', the looks exchanged only fleetingly. "Once your looks cross, everything is clear".

Less clear is the relationship between Julia and her sophisticated partner Carmelo, with whom she has been sharing these understated, dignified moments (and little else) for ten years. It is only when she takes time off from the drudgery of her boring job to search for her lover-substitute that Julia encounters a cast of roguish low-life characters who force her to question everything and to appreciate her own worth and attraction. Novaro cleverly resists the temptation of over-romanticising her theme and is ably assisted by the naturalistic playing of an excellent cast.

The transition from Mexico City's shoddy neon-lit neighbourhoods to the warmer, softer evenings of Veracruz is smoothly accomplished; the scene in which Julia wanders around the dock, inspired by the ships' names ("Lost Love", "Black Tears", "Pure Illusions") rather than the ambience itself, is a cute moment of seduction-by-semiotics. In the charming climax, Julia appears gift-laden, bedecked in primary colours with flowers in her hair. But how will she handle the (inevitable) reunion with Carmelo? Intriguingly, the two partners step straight into a *danzón*, but pause for a moment to look deep into each other's eyes. The stiff formalities with which they have been keeping each other (literally) at arm's length have suddenly been dropped. They may not win any more competitions for technical perfection as dancers, but their ultimate prize beckons enticingly.

Peter Aspden



Sea of love: Maria Rojo

1492: Conquest of Paradise

USA 1992

Director: Ridley Scott

Certificate
15

Distributor
Guild

Production Company
Touchstone

Executive Producers
Mimi Polk Sotela
Iain Smith

Producers
Ridley Scott
Alain Goldman

Co-producers
Marc Boyman
Roselyne Bosch
Pere Pages

Associate Producer
Garth Thomas

Production Executive
Costa Rica:
Maro Sotelo

Production Associate
Costa Rica:
Sergio Miranda

Production Supervisors
Patrick Clayton
Josep Antoni Perez-
Giner

Production Co-ordinators
Joyce Turner
Trilby Norton
Belinda Uriegas

Production Manager
José Luis Escobar

Unit Manager
Chris Brock

Location Managers
Philip Kohler
Juan Carlos Caro
Eduardo Santana
Kevin de la Noy
Mark Albel

Post-production Manager
Sylvia Walker Wilson

Post-production Co-ordinator
Emma Carrigan

2nd Unit Director
Hugh Johnson

Casting
Louis Digialmo
Europe: Priscilla John
Dan Parada
Costa Rican Indians:
Billy Dowd
Crowd: Felix Zapatero

Assistant Directors
Terry Needham
Michael Stevenson
Javier Chinchilla Kern
Adam Somner
Claudia Gomez
Pedro Lazaga
Carlos Lazaro
Ona Planas
2nd Unit:
Kevin de la Noy
Coco van Oppens

Screenplay
Roselyne Bosch

Director of Photography
Adrian Biddle

Camera Operators
David Worley
Martin Kenzie
2nd Unit:
Bob Smith

Video Operator
Caspar Gordon

Film Editors
William Anderson
Françoise Bonnot
Leslie Healey
Deborah Zeitman
Armen Minasian

Production Designer
Norris Spencer

Supervising Art Directors
Benjamin Fernandez
Leslie Tomkins

Art Directors
Raul Antonio Paton
Kevin Phipps

Martin Hitchcock
Luke Scott
Set Decorator
Ann Mollo
Draughtspersons
Jonathan McKinstry
Stephen Dobric
Gary Tomkins
Robert Zammit-Pace
Scenic Artists
Graeme Thompson
Julian Martin Benito
Storyboard Artist
Sherman Laby
Sculptor
Peter Voysey
Special Effects Supervisors
Kit West
Spain:
Reyes Abades
Special Effects
Floor Supervisor:
Yves de Bono
Terry Cox
John Baker
Trevor Wood
Isidro Ruano
Manuel Abades
Felix Cordón
Pedro Balandin
Pedro Moreno
Marcelino Pacheco
Marcelino Pacheco Jnr
Alfonso Pacheco
John Modder
Music
Vangelis
Music Editor
Robin Clarke
Songs
"Fever Ride" by and
performed by Richard
Horowitz; "Una Caza
Chica" performed by
Esthor Lamandier
Costume Design
Charles Knode
Barbara Rutter
Wardrobe Masters
Supervisor:
Andrez Fernandez
Masters:
Stewart Meachem
Agustín Jimenez
Make-up
Chief:
José Antonio Sanchez
Artists:
Maria Carmen Clavel
José Luis Perez
Sigourney Weaver:
Linda de Vetta
Opticals
Peerless Cameras
Computer Film
Company
General Screen
Enterprises
Supervising Sound Editor
Jim Shields
Sound Editors
Peter Best
Derek Holding
Robert Risk
Rocky Phelan
Ron Davis
Sound Recordist
Pierre Gamet
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordist
John Hayward
Historical Advisers
Spain:
Carlos Martinez-Shaw
José Corral Lafuente
Production Assistants
Sean Clayton
Teresa Hidalgo
Jeffrey Healion
Nat Grew
Javier Kuhn
Maite Mata
Fernando Chaparro
David Zapatero
Costa Rica:

Marco Mora
Stunt Co-ordinator
 Greg Powell
Stunts
 Gary Powell
 Nick Gillard
 Graeme Crowther
 Richard Cruz
 Luis M. Gutierrez
 Santos
 Ignacio M. Carreno
 Lopez
 Cristina Diaz Silveira
 Olga Perez Calvo
 Natalia Guijarro
 Salvador Martos Manso
 Jesus Riaran Torres
 Alejandro Cobo Garcia
 Rafael Garcia Garcia
 Pedro Garcia Garcia
 Faustino Garcia Garcia
Swordmaster
 Terry Walsh
Armourer
 Simon Atherton
Animal Consultants
 Francisco Ardura
Wranglers:
 Juan Cruz Domicio
 Melero
Handlers:
 Juan Guirado
 Maria Uribe
 Alexander Vargas
 Manrique Miranda
 Snake:
 Mahmood Sasa
Cast
Gérard Depardieu
 Christopher Columbus
Armand Assante
 Sanchez
Sigourney Weaver
 Queen Isabel
Loren Dean
 Older Fernando

Angela Molina
 Beatrice
Fernando Rey
 Marchena
Michael Wincott
 Moxica
Tcheky Karyo
 Pinzón
Kevin Dunn
 Captain Mendez
Frank Langella
 Santangel
Mark Margolis
 Bobadilla
Kario Salem
 Arojaz
Billy Sullivan
 Fernando, age 10
John Heffernan
 Brother Buyl
Arnold Vosloo
 Guevara
Steven Waddington
 Bartolome
Fernando G. Cuervo
 Giacomo
José Luis Ferrer
 Alonso
Bercelio Moya
 Utopan
Juan Diego Botto
 Diego
Achero Manas
 Ship's Boy
Fernando Garcia Rimada
 King Ferdinand
Albert Vidal
 Hernando de Talavera
Isabel Prinz
 Duenna
Angela Rosal
 Pinzon's Wife
Jack Taylor
 Vicuna

13,992 feet
(70mm)
17,360 feet
155 minutes

Fernando, son of Christopher Columbus, recalls how his father proved to him that the Earth is round. Convinced on this basis that the riches of the Orient could be reached by sailing West from the Canary Islands, Columbus then sought Church support for his proposed voyage of exploration. Assisted by the priest Marchena, he is interrogated by clergy at the University of Salamanca in 1491, where he comes to the attention of Sanchez, adviser to Queen Isabel. The Church refuses approval until, backed by a seasoned mariner, Pinzón, and an influential banker, Santangel, Columbus gains fresh access to Sanchez, and through him the queen. Victorious over the Moors at Granada in 1492, Isabel is intrigued by Columbus' idealism and promises of further glory, and the royal consent is given. On August 3, 1492, after confessing to Marchena that he has no idea how long the voyage will take, Columbus sets sail with three ships, the Pinta, the Niña and the Santa Maria.

His two captains, Pinzón and Mendez, grow increasingly concerned as weeks go by and their crews become restless. Eloquently dissuading his men from mutiny, Columbus is saved from being forced to turn back by the sighting of land. He leads the expedition ashore on October 12 at Guanahani Island, which he claims as Spanish territory under the name San Salvador. The Taino natives soon make the sailors welcome; charmed by the tribe's simple way of life, Columbus keeps his men firmly in check and trains an interpreter, Utopan. But after two months, during which snakebites

and other hazards take their toll, there is little sign of the hoped-for treasure trove. Leaving behind a settlement of 39 men, Columbus sails back to Spain for fresh resources; the mortally sick Pinzón dies soon after their return.

Receiving a hero's welcome, Columbus finds Isabel and Ferdinand delighted at his achievement and happy to sanction a second, larger expedition. Less impressed, Sanchez tries to add one of his own team, Bobadilla, as observer; instead, Columbus recruits his own brothers as reluctant assistants. In November 1493, he returns to the West Indies, only to find the settlement at San Salvador in ruins, the natives claiming that warriors from another tribe killed his men. This prompts a call for revenge from Moxica, a hot-headed Spanish nobleman, but Columbus insists that there will be no violence. On the island of Hispaniola, he begins to construct the first city of the 'New World', marked by the raising of a giant church bell in 1494.

Supervising a gold-mining project, Moxica punishes a native for supposed theft by chopping off his hand. Columbus immediately arrests the nobleman, but the natives rise against their oppressors, and Columbus has to fight for his life. Just as order is restored, he is ambushed by Moxica and a small army of rebels; more bloodshed follows until Moxica is killed and his men executed. Adding to the confusion, tropical storms reduce the city to ruins. When news of his treatment of the nobleman, and of his other failures, reaches Spain, Columbus is replaced by Bobadilla as Viceroy of the Indies in November 1500. He is imprisoned as news comes that another explorer, Amerigo Vespucci, is being celebrated for having found the mainland Columbus was searching for. Rescued from disgrace by the queen, who gives permission – despite the continuing opposition of Sanchez – for him to undertake yet another voyage, the weary explorer is encouraged by his son Fernando to dictate the memoirs that will restore his reputation.

Given the uncertainty among historians over what precisely drove Columbus, an infrequent diarist, to sink slowly into the West, it was only to be expected that Ridley Scott's version of his adventures, like the rival account from John Glen, would stir up an uneasy alchemical potion of fact and fantasy in the hope of finding gold. As if alerted to the casting of Marlon Brando by the Salkinds, Scott's film omits Torquemada altogether – a bold stroke, given his notorious influence on the Spanish throne – while emphasising the macabre grip of the Church not only by a lurid scene of heretic execution but also by repeated panoramas of cathedral glory.

Infested with clergy whose pious inertia constantly perplexes him, Scott's Columbus is finally betrayed by the priest who flees from his duties in the New World in order to cluck protestingly to the Old. Despite this,

the adventurer is never offered to us as a cynic: he meekly accepts the punishment of a night of penance on a chapel floor after losing his temper, he demands Absolution before setting sail, he prays gratefully at landfall, and his first action in creating a new city is to cast and raise the church bell.

When, later, the bell tower is struck by lightning, and a ferocious storm concludes with the image of a burning cross, the hint of Divine anger (or profane dismissal) is left to us to consider, as Columbus makes no reference to it. We might guess that for him, paradoxically, the bell project signalled his 'conversion' to a new faith, based on his admiration for – and envy of – the imperturbable simplicity of the island tribes. "Nature is their God", he explains, watching his words with necessary caution when the queen enquires about the persuasion of the heathens; the queen, we may recall, also celebrated 1492 by driving out both the Moors and the Jews (and Columbus may have been a converted Jew), so the 'innocence' of the natives was a sensitive concern.

Innocence lost not so much because of the Serpent (whose only screen victim is Spanish) as through an invasion of Satanic malevolence and greed, the New World begins to disintegrate as Columbus finds himself in a frenzy of killing, forced to restage the executions he formerly despised. "Paradise and Hell", he observes, a daring thought for the time, "can be earthly – we carry them with us wherever we go". What he has also carried, unavoidably but fatally (like a sickness which, incidentally, the film only shows as afflicting the Europeans, never the natives), is an inflexible arrogance which enables him to address royalty as his equals and to remain convinced, to the end of his days, that he had reached the oceanic edge of Asia. That the Church then hails Amerigo Vespucci, not him, merely reconfirms its habitual treachery, and he accepts the blow without comment.

He has already recognised his failure – at the moment when his interpreter, Utopan, at last abandons him. "You never learned how to speak my language", says the Native American, and slips back into the forest like a ghost. Entrusted to carry the word of



Out of the mists: Gérard Depardieu

God and Spain, Scott's Columbus proves equally non-committal on matters of plunder, his hidden but most vital agenda. Something of an anti-materialist in the course of his wanderings, he relieves the island tribes of a fair amount of jewellery, sanctions a gold-mining operation, and writes sadly home that he has found nothing to match Marco Polo's descriptions of opulence. The natives comment wryly on the Spanish interest in women and gold, but if this Columbus has anything more than the equivalent to a film-maker's interest in protecting the investment of his financiers, he keeps it firmly concealed.

Asked by his son, finally, what he remembers of his first voyage, Columbus cites the wild surmise of the moment when the New World emerges from the mists (as well he may, given Scott's *coup de théâtre* at this point). Asked by the queen why he should be allowed on yet another voyage, he begs to be able to explore the land of his dreams before he dies. Challenged by Sanchez (Scott's devious substitute for history's – and Mario Puzo's – King Ferdinand, otherwise glimpsed in morose silence) to justify his pursuit of New World attractions when the spires of Spanish civilisation already "reach the sky", the navigator smartly sums up the long-term enmity between them: "I did it. You didn't".

If Ridley Scott's Columbus, fully substantiated by Gérard Depardieu, is to be really understood, the clues, not too surprisingly, are to be traced among his predecessors, those who 'did it' and confounded their opponents. Among these wanderers are the obsessive swordsmen of *The Duellists*, the space-travelled replicants of *Blade Runner*, the careless fugitives of *Thelma & Louise*. Speaking for them all, Columbus identifies "an unexplored Eden, the chance of a new beginning", and the kind of legend to which Scott has consistently responded in his catalogue of fresh starts and dying falls.

The film is constructed so skilfully that it can be forgiven if the narrative, sweeping back and forth between continents to match the growing chaos of its hero's life, dulls by comparison with the splendour of the costumes, the fascination of the island forests with their billowing arcades of foliage, and the gentle mystery of a world of candles, torches and firelight. Scott's manipulative technique – *Alien*-style strobe flashes for a tropical storm, hand-held camera and an unnerving electronic tone for the first encounter with the tribesmen, soaring chorale for a breathtaking shot of the three caravels on a silver sea – is applied with a piercing accuracy and grace to anything from massive crowd scenes to the details of shipboard routine. The superb staging of the arrival in the New World, the camera curling expectantly around the eager boats and triumphant banners, confirms that Columbus and his chronicler are driven by a strikingly similar audacity.

Philip Strick

Glengarry Glen Ross

USA 1992

Director: James Foley

Certificate
15

Distributor
Rank

Production Company
Zupnik Enterprises
Executive Producer
Joseph Caracciolo Jr

Producers
Stanley R. Zupnik
Jerry Tokofsky

Co-producers
Morris Ruskin
Nava Levin

Associate Producer
Karen L. Oliver

Production Associate
Lori H. Schwartz

Production Co-ordinator
Sandy Cuomo

Unit Production Manager
Celia D. Costas

Location Manager
Patricia Anne Doherty

Post-production Supervisor
Helene Mulholland

Casting
Bonnie Timmerman

Extras:
Sylvia Fay

Assistant Directors
Thomas A. Reilly
Richard Drew Patrick

Screenplay
David Mamet

Based on his own play
Director of Photography
Juan Ruiz Anchia

Colour
Eastman Colour

Camera Operator
Craig Haagensen

Editor
Howard Smith

Production Designer
Jane Musky

Art Director
Bill Barclay

Set Decorator
Robert J. Franco

Set Dressers
Jim Archer
Robert H. Klatt
Thomas McDermott

Draughtsman
Cathy Maxey

Master Scenic Artist
Richard Ventre

Scenic Artists
Leslie Sautler
Douglas Lebrecht
Denise Gorkas

Camera:
Bill Sohmer
Patricia Walker

Special Effects
Co-ordinator
Mike Maggi

Music
James Newton Howard

Tenor/Soprano Saxophone
Performed by
Wayne Shorter

Orchestrations
Brad Dechter

Music Producers
Tommy Lipuma

Additional:
Johnny Mandel
Tommy Lipuma

Music Supervisor
Tommy Lipuma

Music Editor
Tom Kramer

Music Co-ordinator
Michael Mason

Songs
"Blue Skies" by Irving
Berlin, performed by
Al Jarreau; "Prelude
to a Kiss" by Duke
Ellington, Irving Mills,
Irving Gordon,
performed by The Bill

Holman Orchestra;
"Blue Lou" by Donald
Fagen, performed by
the Joe Rocciano
Orchestra; "Daydream"
by Duke Ellington,
Billy Strayhorn,
performed by
David Sanborn

Costume Design
Jane Greenwood

Associate:
David M. Charles

Wardrobe Supervisors
Kevin P. Faherty
Hartsell Taylor

Make-up Artists
Sheryl Berkoff
Sharon Ilson

Supervising Sound Editor
Howell Gibbens

Sound Editors
Constance A. Kazher
Denise Horta

Joseph A. Ippolito
Foley Editor
Matthew Harrison

Sound Recordists
Danny Michael
Music:

Robert Schaper
Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists
Wayne Artman
Tom E. Dahl

Frank Jones
Sound Effects Editors
Frank Howard
Ed Callahan

Foley Artist
Edward Stidell

Music Adviser
George Greif

Production Assistants
Office:
JoAnn Foley
Donald Murphy
Christo Morse

Set:
Gregory Gieras
Andrew Bernstein
Danielle Rigby
Justin Moritt
Leslie Lofitis

Post-production:
Mary Skinner

Cast
Al Pacino
Ricky Roma
Jack Lemmon
Shelley Levene
Alec Baldwin
Blake
Alan Arkin
George Aaronow
Ed Harris
Dave Moss
Kevin Spacey
John Williamson
Jonathan Pryce
James Ling
Bruce Altman
Mr Spannel
Jude Ciccolella
Detective
Paul Butler
Policeman
Lori Tann Chinn
Coat Check Woman
Neal Jones
Man in Doughnut Shop
Barry Rosson
Assistant Detective
Leigh French
George Cheung
Murphy Dunne
Dana Lee
Julie Payne
Greg Snegoff
Additional Voices

9,014 feet
100 minutes

In the real-estate offices of Premiere Properties, four salesmen face the prospect of a competition which promises a Cadillac to the winner, a set of steak knives to the runner-up, and the sack for the last two. To 'inspire' the team, Blake, a representative from head office, delivers a humiliating campaign speech. Shelley Levene, one of the office veterans, with a daughter in hospital, tries to persuade the office manager, John Williamson, to give him better 'leads', the names of prospective clients. George Aaronow, also older, seems resigned to having lost his touch, while the middle-aged Dave Moss broods over the contemptuous way they are treated by the company, and dreams of hitting back.

Ricky Roma, the salesman leading in the competition, doesn't turn up for Blake's lecture, but in the Chinese restaurant across the street has snared another client, James Ling, with his smooth patter. Moss and Aaronow also repair to the restaurant, where Moss proposes that they should steal the company's premium leads, for a real-estate development called Glengarry Highlands, and sell them to another company for five thousand dollars. Aaronow tries to pull back when Moss insists they should rob the office that night; Moss then declares he will do it himself and, if caught, name Aaronow as his accomplice.

Levene meanwhile continues to badger Williamson for better leads (in between desperate calls to his daughter's hospital), even offering to pay him part of his commission and a lump sum for the leads. But he is frustrated by Williamson's unwavering insistence on immediate payment. The next morning, the salesmen arrive to find the office ransacked, the Glengarry leads stolen, and a detective waiting to question each of them in turn. James Ling appears, wanting to back out of his deal with Roma; the latter tries to stall him, until the statutory three days within which he is allowed to change his mind have run out, by reassuring him that his contract has not yet been filed.

Misunderstanding this, Williamson then tells Ling that his contract was filed before the break-in. Ling rushes out to reclaim his money, while Williamson comes in for a torrent of abuse from Roma about the need to back up a partner. Levene, who is triumphant over having just signed an eighty-two-thousand-dollar contract with two apparently hopeless leads, the Nyborgs, echoes Roma's sentiments. But in the process, he inadvertently reveals that he knew Williamson was only pretending to have filed Ling's contract, thus identifying himself as the burglar. He confesses that he went in as Moss' accomplice, and tries once more to buy Williamson off. Smugly turning him down, and telling him that the Nyborgs are notorious for making deals they can't back up, Williamson prepares to turn him in.

Glengarry Glen Ross may be unique among theatrical adaptations in



Long night's journey: Jack Lemmon...

that it has been made more like a play before being put on the screen. David Mamet's original generated significant dramatic heat while needing only the sketchiest dramatic *mise en scène*. Mamet is the master of the basic concept that says it all – in this case, four real-estate salesmen caught in a cut-throat competition which only two of them can survive. From the wreckage which this primal contest leaves behind, reviewers can easily pick out the larger themes: "a chillingly funny indictment of a world in which you are what you sell"; "Mamet is again dramatising The Deal and the high comic ironies of entrepreneurial capitalism".

That basic situation doesn't need to be developed or complicated, all it needs is to become more intensely what it is. And to this end, Mamet deploys language as his prime, punishing tool: a rising crescendo of catch-phrases, repetitions, half-thoughts and pressing needs, all glued together with non-stop obscenity. *Glengarry Glen Ross* was dedicated to Harold Pinter, which is piquant considering the latter's reputation for the pregnant pause, and Mamet's for characters who never shut up. But it does testify to the way the fabric of illusion, something spun out of the inner lives of their characters, is what matters to them both.

For this adaptation, Mamet has given that fabric a different, more conventional and solidly dramatic shape. The original play for voices – orchestrated over two acts, with three scenes, each with two characters, in the first,



...Al Pacino

then a mighty, undivided ensemble for the second – has become a more subtly interwoven, thematically developed piece about "entrepreneurial capitalism", office politics, and the perils of life dependent on The Deal. The conflicts are now rooted in an entirely new scene, involving a new character, Alec Baldwin's visiting sales representative, who gets the do-or-die competition going with a hardline speech about the ruthless glories of selling and acquiring that outstrips anything in the original play.

The struggle for survival amongst the four salesmen is then charted by developing the individual drama of Jack Lemmon's Shelley Levene, oldest of the group, whose pleading references to his daughter are given more substance here, and by playing up slightly the resentment of the others for their star performer, Al Pacino's vulpine Ricky Roma. The result has undeniably become more of a 'well-made play' than the original, less stark about its metaphors for a society in which winning and losing is all, more intent on involving us in the emotional consequences. It also includes a classic piece of 'opening out', in which we actually see Levene go out on a 'sit', the fabled occasion when the salesman must convert an unenthusiastic prospect into a client.

James Foley gives an atmospheric depth to the two main locations, the real-estate office itself, and the Chinese restaurant across the neon-lit, rain-washed street. But the slightly abstract air of the night-time scenes, which reproduce the elemental city of the mind described by Mamet, sits oddly with the more naturalistic look of the 'morning after'. Foley's film, in the end, is an entertaining but slightly uncomfortable marriage both of different stage traditions and of movie ways of dealing with them. Mamet has developed the script in a style truest to himself when he follows Levene through a hopeless night of emblematic scenes – going in endless circles of pleading, driving, phone-calling. Elsewhere, this day-in-the-life of hard-pressed urbanites recalls the 'new realism' – naturalism with a theatrical edge and intensity – of, say, 50s and 60s Sidney Lumet.

Richard Combs

Husbands and Wives

USA 1992

Director: Woody Allen

Certificate

15
Distributor
 Columbia TriStar
Production Company
 TriStar Pictures
Executive Producers
 Jack Rollins
 Charles H. Joffe
Producer
 Robert Greenhut
Co-producers
 Helen Robin
 Joseph Hartwick
Associate Producer
 Thomas Reilly
Production Associate
 Scott Kordish
Production Co-ordinator
 Helen Robin
Production Manager
 Joseph Hartwick
Location Manager
 Dana Robin

Casting

Juliet Taylor
 Associate:
 Laura Rosenthal
 Additional:
 Todd Thaler Casting
Assistant Directors
 Thomas Reilly
 Richard Patrick
 Justin Moritt

Screenplay

Woody Allen

Director of Photography

Carlo Di Palma

Colour

DuArt;

Prints by Technicolor

Camera Operator

Dick Mingalone

Video

Joe Trammell

Editor

Susan E. Morse

Production Designer

Santo Loquasto

Art Director

Speed Hopkins

Set Decorator

Susan Bode

Set Dresser

Dave Weinman

Scenic Artists

Master:

James Sorice

Standby:

Cosmo Sorice

Music Extract

"Symphony No. 9 in D

("Andante Comodo")

by Gustav Mahler,

performed by Sir John

Barbirolli and the Berlin

Philharmonic

Songs

"What Is This Thing

Called Love" by Cole

Porter, performed by

Leo Reisman and his

Orchestra; "West Coast

Blues" by and

performed by John

L. (Wes) Montgomery;

"That Old Feeling" by

Lew Brown, Sammy

Fain, performed by Stan

Getz, Gerry Mulligan;

"Top Hat, White Tie and

Tails" by Irving Berlin,

"Makin' Whoopee"

by Walter Donaldson,

Gus Kahn, "The Song

Is You" by Jerome Kern,

Oscar Hammerstein III,

performed by Bernie

Leighton

Costume Design

Jeffrey Kurland

Wardrobe

Men's Supervisor:

Bill Christians

Women's Supervisor:

Patricia Eiben

Make-up Artist

Fern Buchner

Titles

The Effects House

Corporation

Sound Editor

Bob Hein

Sound Recordists

James Sabat

Frank Graziadei

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordist

Lee Dichter

Production Assistants

Tom Amos

Tracy Bonbrest

Tristan Bourne

Tony Fleming

Dave Hummel

Sam Hutchins

Leslie Loftis

Tina Stauffer

Gilbert S. Williams Jnr

Nicholas Wolfert

Tom Yeager

Cast

Woody Allen

Gabe Roth

Blythe Danner

Rain's Mother

Judy Davis

Sally

Mia Farrow

Judy Roth

Juliette Lewis

Rain

Liam Neeson

Michael

Sydney Pollack

Jack

Lysette Anthony

Sam

Cristi Conaway

Shawn Grainger

Timothy Jerome

Paul

Ron Rifkin

Rain's Analyst

Nick Metropolis

TV Scientist

Jeffrey Kurland

Interviewer/Narrator

Bruce Jay Friedman

Peter Styles

Rebecca Glenn

Gail

Galaxy Craze

Harriet

Beno Schmidt

Judy's Ex-Husband

John Doumanian

Gordon Rigby

Hampton's Party Guests

Irene Blackman

Receptionist

Brian McConnachie

Rain's Father

Ron August

John Bucher

Rain's Ex-Lovers

Matthew Flint

Rain's Boyfriend

Jerry Zaks

Caroline Aaron

Jack Richardson

Nora Ephron

Ira Wheeler

Dinner Party Guests

Kenneth Edelson

Michelle Turley

Victor Truro

Kenny Vance

Lisa Gustin

Anthony Nocerino

Gabe's Novel Montage

Philip Levy

Taxi Dispatcher

Connie Picard

Steve Randazzo

Tony Turco

Adelaide Mestre

Banducci Family

Jessica Frankston

Merv Bloch

Birthday Party Guests

9,699 feet

108 minutes



What is this thing: Juliette Lewis, Woody Allen

Gabe and Judy Roth, a New York couple, are visited for dinner by their friends Jack and Sally, who announce that they have decided to separate after a long marriage. Judy is deeply distraught, and starts to question the stability of her own marriage. Gabe explains the background to Jack and Sally's parting: Jack had started seeing a call-girl, on the prompting of a business partner. Gabe and Judy discuss the problems of their marriage: his unwillingness to have children, and the stress on their sex life caused by busy schedules.

During an evening with a prospective date, Sally telephones Jack, furious that he is living with someone new. Gabe is becoming attracted to Rain, a twenty-year-old student in the creative writing class he teaches. Walking in the street, Sally, Judy and Gabe meet Jack with his new girlfriend Sam, and Sally leaves in a rage. Later, Sally tells Judy she has come to enjoy being single, and explains Judy's distress at her splitting with Jack - it is because she too always dreamed of being single. Judy introduces Sally to a work colleague of hers, Michael. Gabe and Judy discuss their marriage; he now wants to talk about children, but she sees this as a sign of his discontent.

Sally and Michael date, but she is uncertain about accepting his advances. Rain introduces Gabe to her parents, and he has a run-in with her ex-boyfriend (and former therapist), one of a series of older men with whom she has had relationships. Judy's rapport with Michael grows over her poems, which she has shown to him but never to Gabe. At a party, Jack hears that Sally is seeing Michael, and this prompts a furious row with Sam; he drives to Sally's house and stages a confrontation, as Sam and Michael look on.

Rain has read Gabe's novel about relationships, but has left it in a taxi - en route to retrieve it, her criticism of

it only fuels his growing infatuation with her. After a dinner with Jack and Sally, who are now reunited, Gabe and Judy split up, with her telling him she wants to explore her feelings for Michael. On the night of a rainstorm, Gabe and Rain kiss at her twenty-first birthday party; Judy and Michael quarrel; and Jack and Sally stay in bed together. A year and a half later, Judy and Michael are married, and Jack and Sally discuss their repaired marriage. Gabe explains that he decided not to get involved with Rain, and that he is currently single and working on a new novel.

Rushed out by its British distributor to coincide with the showbiz shock-horror story of the year, *Husbands and Wives* is the first Woody Allen film in which the ironies are not strictly internal. However, those uncomfortable moments in which the film appears to comment on the headlines (as when Judy plaintively enquires, "You think we'd ever break up?", or Gabe admits, "I've learned nothing over the years") run out after some ten minutes as the film's own logic takes effect. In fact, those determined to read the film for signs that the eternal good guy Woody was a fool or a villain all along will find rather less convincing evidence here than they might in the temporarily shelved *Shadows and Fog* (its predecessor), in which Allen's persecuted Joseph K figure turns out to be guilty as sin.

Husbands and Wives returns to Allen's favourite question - "What is this thing called love?" Thematically and visually, it is a companion-piece to *Hannah and Her Sisters* and *Crimes and Misdemeanors*, set in the same urbane milieu. Formally, though, it adopts a quasi-documentary approach, with the story told partly in flashbacks, partly by characters offering testimony and others in interviews (complete with

clip-on mike) with an unseen interlocutor. This interviewer might be pictured as a journalist trying to assemble a whole truth (extremely long takes with hand-held camera push the *vérité* aesthetic to its limit) out of a fragmented picture, *Kane*-style; or as an interrogating God, the deity who, says Gabe in the film's first one-liner, plays hide-and-seek rather than, as Einstein imagined, dice; or, since this is a Woody Allen film, as a therapist.

In the latter case, the film could be seen as a double therapy. On one level, its characters delve into their motives, learn to read through their own self-deceptions, and emerge wiser if not wholly repaired. Thus, Gabe ends up reconciled to solitude and able to embark on a new novel, "less confessional, more political"; thus, Jack and Sally accept that their sexual problems are to be lived with. On another level, the film could be read as being therapeutic for its writer-director in that it exorcises certain possibilities of life, rehearsing them and perhaps preempting them.

This is not to say that *Husbands and Wives* should be taken as being 'about' Allen's real-life complications; rather, those complications would have to be read as being partly 'about' the dilemmas reviewed by this film. That Gabe makes a decision *not* to go off with Rain in no way reflects on Woody Allen's own dealings with younger women. But it is clear that the film and the reality invite us to perceive parallels and divergences, because Allen has always used his films to make public certain questions of personal interest to him, and - more peculiarly - to display publicly those questions as being of interest to him. Seen in this way, the film acts as an added incentive to read the Allen-Farrow case in the same quasi-literary terms in which we read his films' narratives.

Curiously, though, in view of the fact that Allen's real life is currently

being read as essentially a moral drama, *Husbands and Wives* is less to do with moral decisions (compared, say, with *Crimes and Misdemeanors*), than with people's self-deception and mutual dependence. As individuals, Jack and Sally are less than the totality they form as "Jack and Sally", but rather than being a paean to marriage, the film demonstrates that they need first to be separated before they can properly be together. As far as such observations go, much of the film outdoes Rohmer at his most acute, and is certainly more acerbic. Two exceptionally discomfiting scenes involve Jack and Sally's respective rages when they discover that the person they want to be separate from is together with someone else.

Husbands and Wives is also acute about the way that these characters act out their dramas almost consciously, perhaps as stories to tell future therapists. The love scenes on the night of the thunderstorm are practically staged melodrama, with pathetic fallacy laid on *ad lib*. The messiness and multiplicity of life is also well caught, as different characters' memories and experiences bleed into each other. Gabe comes face to face with Rain's array of past lovers, and his own voracious but crazy ex-lover Harriet (a briefly glimpsed paradigm of all Allen's manifestly excessive fantasy women) is a figure against whom every other woman in his life must measure up.

But for all its insightfulness, the film reveals Allen's fatal flaw – a terrible snobbery, directed here with unwarranted cruelty at the astrology-obsessed Sam. She is shown up as the ridiculous object of Jack's regressive infatuation ("So she's not Simone de Beauvoir", he protests); she is made out to be a manifestly unworthy object of his attentions, as opposed to simply inadequate, as Rain is for Gabe. An aerobics instructor, she is mistaken for a cocktail waitress (both jobs are clearly considered equally contemptible); it is surely not just Gabe and Jack who look down on her, but the film itself. If only she were as naturally talented and – the ultimate saving grace for Allen – as neurotic as the clearly superior Rain. Perhaps an aerobics teacher is just too healthy to have a place in Allen's world.

This dead giveaway about Allen's values is perhaps an inevitable side product in a film which suggests that, despite illusion and equivocation, 'truth will out'. It is razor-sharp on slips – as in the taxi scene, when Rain inadvertently compares Gabe's novel to *Triumph of the Will*, and he retorts by calling her a "twenty-year-old twit". Characters end up saying what they really mean; in that light, one might read the film as a clue that, having indulged in enough self-exposure to last a lifetime, Allen may be moving on to other things. Gabe follows the news about his new novel with a phrase that makes one wonder whether Allen is finally ready to withdraw from play as a character in his own fiction: "Can I go – is this over?"

Jonathan Romney

The Last of the Mohicans

USA 1992

Director: Michael Mann

Certificate (Not yet issued)
Distributor Warner Bros
Production Company Morgan Creek
Executive Producer James G. Robinson
Producers Michael Mann
Hunt Lowry
Supervising Producer Ned Dowd
Unit Production Managers Ned Dowd
Ellen Rauch
2nd Unit Directors Mickey Gilbert
Gusmano Cesaretti
Casting Bonnie Timmerman
Extras/Location: Shirley Fulton Crumley
London: Susie Figgis
Assistant Directors Michael Waxman
Daniel Stillman
Screenplay Michael Mann
Christopher Crowe
Based on the novel by James Fenimore Cooper and the screenplay by Philip Dunne
Adaptation John L. Balderston
Paul Perez
Daniel Moore
Director of Photography Dante Spinotti
Scope In colour
Additional Photography Doug Milsome
2nd Unit Director of Photography Jerry G. Callaway
Camera Operators Don Reddy
Michael McGowan
Steadicam Operators Kyle Rudolph
Bob Ulland
Editors Dov Hoenig
Arthur Schmidt
Additional: Jere Huggins
Wayne Wahrman
Production Designer Wolf Kroeger
Art Directors Richard Holland
Robert Guerra
Set Design Karl Martin
Masako Masuda
Set Decorators Jim Erickson
James V. Kent
Special Effects Co-ordinator Tom Fisher
Special Effects Scott Fisher
Roger Hansen
Jay King
Terry King
Bruce Minkus
Howard "Peppy" Richardson
Richard Scioli
Music Trevor Jones
Randy Edelman
Additional: Daniel Lanois
Songs "The Gael" by Dougie MacLean; "The House in Rose Valley" by and performed by Phil Cunningham; "I Will

Find You" by Ciaran Brennan, performed by Clannard
Costume Design Elsa Zamparelli
Wardrobe Supervisor: Jennifer Butler
Military: J. Craig Nannos
Make-up Key: Peter Robb-King
Artists: John R. Bayless
Jeff Goodwin
Rita Parillo
Joan Rieger
Jane Royle
Prosthetic Make-up Artists Evan Campbell
Nicholas Dudman
Vincent Guastini
Christopher Johnson
Neal B. Kelly
Joe Macchia
Sound Design Lon E. Bender
ADR Supervisor Gregg Baxter
Sound Effects Supervisor Larry Kemp
Foley Skywalker Sound
Taj Soundworks
Military Costume Adviser Richard E. LaMotte
Military Technical Adviser Captain Dale Dye
Technical Adviser David Webster
Eighteenth Century Frontier Consultant Lee Teter
Eighteenth Century Military Consultant Philip Haythornthwaite
Stunt Co-ordinator Mickey Gilbert
Stunts Timothy Barnett
Stan Barrett
Paul Beahm
Virgil Ben
Simone Boissiere
Bruce Bradley
Mark S. Brien
Joseph G. Brown
Thunder Jnr
Brian Burrows
Mark Chadwick
R. J. Chambers
Cary Mitchell Chavis
John M. Copeman
Richard Duran
Mitch Factor
David Christian
Fletcher
Billy Joe Fredericks
Brian P. Frejo
Lance Gilbert
Tim Gilbert
Troy Gilbert
Leon Good Striker
Sherry R. Ham
Robert O. Hardridge
James Hawzipta
Charles Hosack
Howard S. Jackson
C. L. Johnson
Jamie A. Keyser
Larry King
Jim Lewis
Clint "Burkey" Lilley
Juddson Kieth Linn
Ray E. Logan
Dave Lowry
Billy D. Lucas
Alvin Dutch Lunak
Danny Mabry
Gene Matt
Mike McGaughey
Jamie Jo Medearis
Dean Mumford

Guy M. Musgrove
 Ron Norris
 Cisco R. Oliveira
 Bernie Pock
 Volley "Punk" Reed
 Wayne Richards
 Mario Roberts
 Debby Lynn Ross
 Don Ruffin
 Robert Russell
 Lonnie R. Smith Jnr
 Joseph D. Tillman
 Adam C. Trammell
 Tim Trela
 James A. Twoguns
 Melvin Wachacha
 Kenneth L. Walker
 Jim Waters
 Ric Waugh
 Scott Waugh
 David Webster
 Beasley Willis Snr
 Thomas Wyatt
 Harry C. Ynguanzo

Cast
Daniel Day-Lewis
 Hawkeye
Madeleine Stowe
 Cora Munro
Russell Means
 Chingachgook
Eric Schweig
 Uncas
Jodhi May
 Alice Munro
Steven Waddington
 Major Duncan
 Heyward
Wes Studi
 Magua
Maurice Roëves
 Colonel Edmund Munro
Patrice Chéreau
 General Montcalm
Edward Blatchford
 Jack Winthrop
Terry Kinney
 John Cameron
Tracey Ellis
 Alexandra Cameron
Justin M. Rice
 James Cameron

10,980 feet
 122 minutes

1757, the colony of New York. In the wilderness of the Adirondack mountains, the Mohican Chingachgook, his natural son Uncas, and adopted son Hawkeye, the orphan of massacred white settlers, hunt down a deer. In the evening, they visit the lonely cabin of their friends, the Camerons, and the next day listen to Major Duncan Heyward, a regular English officer, exhort the settlers to fight for their king against the French and their Huron and Ottawa allies. While some join up, others, including Cameron, decide to stay home to protect their families from raiding parties, and Hawkeye sets out with his father and brother for Kentucky. In Albany, General Webb assures the irregulars that, at the first report of raids, they will be released to return to the defence of their homes.

With a Mohawk scout, Magua, Heyward and his men are sent to Fort Henry on Lake Champlain, taking with them Cora and Alice Munro, daughters of the fort commander, Colonel Edmund Munro. Heyward presses his suit with Cora, who protests that she does not love him. On the trail, the Redcoats are betrayed by Magua and caught in a Huron ambush. Hawkeye, Chingachgook and Uncas emerge from the forest just in time to save Heyward, Cora and Alice. They proceed to Fort Henry – finding the Cameron family massacred on the way – and have to sneak through the French lines to reach the besieged fort. Once told about the Camerons, the militiamen opt to return to their homes, but are refused permission by Munro.

That evening, Hawkeye helps the militiamen to slip away; later he meets with Cora, with whom he has struck up a relationship on the trail, and they embrace. The next day, an enraged Munro imprisons Hawkeye and plans to hang him for sedition. Munro negotiates terms with the French general, Montcalm, and the English are permitted to leave. But Magua, who turns out not to be a Mohawk but a Huron, sets about exacting his revenge against Munro, whom he holds responsible for

the loss of his wife and children and his enslavement by the Mohawks. In an ambush, Munro is killed by Magua, but Hawkeye frees himself from his chains and dashes to the rescue of Cora, Alice and Heyward; together with Chingachgook and Uncas, they escape by canoe and take refuge in a cave. At Cora's urging, Hawkeye, Chingachgook and Uncas escape by leaping out into the falls while Cora, Alice and Heyward are taken prisoner.

At a Huron village, Magua boasts to a sachem that, now a great war chief, he will kill the Munro women and ransom Heyward. At that moment, Hawkeye, taking advantage of the rules of Huron hospitality, walks into the camp and challenges Magua's decree. After an argument, the sachem rules that Heyward be freed, Alice given to Magua as a bride, and Cora burned at the stake. Heyward offers his life for Cora's, and as Hawkeye and Cora leave the camp, Hawkeye puts Heyward out of his agony at the stake with a rifle shot. Uncas, who has exchanged many meaningful looks with Alice, races after Magua's party. Mortally wounded by Magua, Uncas is pitched off the mountainside, and Alice throws herself after him. Hawkeye and Chingachgook attack, and the latter despatches Magua. With Cora, they gather at the cliffside to pray for the souls of Alice and of Uncas, the last member of the Mohican tribe.

One of the problems with historical sagas is that a film-maker is strongly tempted to settle for mere pictorialism; in *The Last of the Mohicans*, Michael Mann strives for the picturesque and fails to achieve it. This is quite a feat, considering the visual possibilities inherent in James Fenimore Cooper's story of love and survival on America's roughly edenic eighteenth-century frontier. Working with the self-defeating combination of wide-screen compositions and long, shallow-focus lenses, Mann manages to ensure that his trio of forest-dwelling frontier heroes – Hawkeye, his adoptive Mohican father Chingachgook, and brother Uncas – will look just as divorced from their life-sustaining landscape as the ducks-in-a-row British Redcoats.

Mann has no gift for action either. Although two of his set-pieces start off well – the French and Huron assault on Fort Henry, and the Huron ambush of the retreating British forces – they



Avoiding complications: Jodhi May

◀ soon degenerate into blurry pans of helter-skelter activity, occasionally punctuated by a heavily accented bit of violence. This confusion is particularly egregious in the ambush, since we are supposed to watch Hawkeye rush across the tumultuous killing field just in time to rescue Cora and Alice from impending slashed throats. But Mann never satisfactorily establishes the battle's parameters, so shots of Hawkeye bludgeoning his way through the waltzing combatants in no clear direction alternate with close-ups of the women, until, suddenly and arbitrarily, he is miraculously there.

Isolated and lost, the characters are also diminished. Whenever Mann pulls back for what are clearly supposed to be breathtaking establishing shots, the wide panoramas are subverted by the lens' flattening of space. In these long—but never truly wide—shots, the heroes don't look like men scaling a wilderness so much as mice scurrying through fields. The violence Mann perpetrates on the landscape—the film was shot in North Carolina's Blue Ridge and Smokey Mountains—is equalled by his reworking of Cooper's story. Back in 1826, apparently, Cooper was more comfortable with inter-racial love than Mann is today, for Cooper's love story was between Cora and the Mohican Uncas.

Mann restricts Uncas' sexuality almost exclusively to a series of smouldering glances he exchanges with the younger, naive Alice, and transfers all the actualised passion on to Hawkeye and the more sexually ripe Cora. Aside from rendering the film's title meaningless, the switch perpetuates a racist interpretation of acceptable sexuality. When Cora and Uncas die, Cooper suggested, it is so old races can give way to a new 'American' race—an anachronistic notion, perhaps, but at least a symbolically coherent one. When Mann kills off Uncas and Alice, it's just a way of avoiding racial complications.

Russell Means and Eric Schweig give us plausibly, if conventionally, noble Native Americans, and Steven Waddington is perfect as the supercilious ass, Heyward. But Daniel Day-Lewis' Hawkeye is an astonishing array of bad choices, turning the rough-and-ready frontiersman into a droll man-about-the-wilderness; in fact, he's as infuriatingly smug as Heyward. Mann probably encouraged Day-Lewis in these choices, since they fit into the pattern of destruction that marks the whole project.

Anyone familiar with Mann's popular TV series, *Miami Vice*, should recognise the similarities wreaked here: a pair of cops, one white and one not so (Hawkeye and Uncas), under the tutelage of a wise superior (Chingachgook) save beautiful and helpless women (Cora and Alice) from a vengeful killer (Magua), while fighting interference from a central-government bureaucrat (Heyward). The transformation of *The Last of the Mohicans* into *Adirondack Vice* is thus a successful and intentional disaster.

Henry Sheehan

A League of Their Own

USA 1992

Director: Penny Marshall

Certificate

PG

Distributor

Columbia TriStar

Production Company

Columbia

Executive Producer

Penny Marshall

Producers

Robert Greenhut

Elliot Abbott

Associate Producer

Amy Lemisch

Production Co-ordinators

Ingrid Johanson

Alexis Alexanian

Unit Production Manager

Timothy M. Bourne

Location Manager

Dennis T. Benatar

Casting

Extras:

Lisa S. Beasley

Chicago:

Jane Brody

Assistant Directors

Michael Haley

John Rusk

2nd Unit:

Gaetano Lisi

Robert Huberman

James Greenhut

Sam Hoffman

Screenplay

Lowell Ganz

Babaloo Mandel

Based on a story by

Kim Wilson, Kelly

Candaele

Director of Photography

Miroslav Ondricek

Colour

Technicolor

Additional Photography

Thomas Priestley

Camera Operators

Thomas Priestley

Craig DiBona

2nd Unit:

George Kohut

George Loomis

Dick Mingalone

Graphic Design

Ted Haigh

Editor

George Bowers

Film:

Adam Bernardi

Production Designer

Bill Groom

Art Director

Tim Galvin

Set Decorator

George DeTitta Jr

Scenic Artists

Chargeman:

Robert Topol

Master:

Tony Trotta

Storyboard Artist

Jane Clark

Music

Hans Zimmer

Music Editor

Laura Perlman

Songs

"This Used to Be

My Playground" by

Madonna, Shep

Pettibone, performed

by Madonna; "Now

and Forever" by and

performed by Carole

King; "In a Sentimental

Mood" by Duke

Ellington, Emanuel

Kurtz, Irving Mills,

performed by James

Taylor; "Two Sleepy

People" by Frank

Loesser, Hoagy

Carmichael, performed

by Art Garfunkel;

"Choo Choo Ch'Boogie"

by Vaughn Horton,

Denver Darling, Milton

Gabler; "On the Sunny

Side of the Street" by

Jimmy McHugh,

Dorothy Fields,

performed by The

Manhattan Transfer;

"The All American

Girls Professional

Baseball League Song"

by Lavone Pepper Paire

Davis, performed by

The Rockford Peaches;

"Flying Home" by

Benny Goodman,

Lionel Hampton,

performed by Doc's

Rhythm Cats; "It Had

to Be You" by Isham

Jones, Gus Kahn;

"Over There" by George

M. Cohan; "Take Me

Out to the Ball Game"

by Jack Norworth,

Albert Von Tilzer

Costume Design

Cynthia Flynt

Wardrobe

Men:

David Dumais Michael

Adkins

Women:

Irene Ferrari

Make-up Artists

Key:

Bernadette Mazur

Paul Gebbia

Joseph Campayno

Linda B. Neuffer

Titles

Pacific Title

& Art Studio

Opticals

Cinema Research

Corporation

Supervising Sound Editor

Dennis Drummond

Sound Editors

Wayne Griffin

Dialogue:

Alison Fisher

Andrew Patterson

Supervising ADR Editor

Beth Bergeron

ADR Editors

Robert Heffernan

Michele Perrone

Bobbi Banks

Kimberly Harris

Foley Editors

Pamela Bentowski

Sukey Fontelieu

Sound Recordists

Les Lazarowitz

2nd Unit:

David Obermeyer

Music:

Jay Rifkin

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists

Chris Jenkins

Scott Millan

Adam Jenkins

Technical Advisers

Karen S. Kunkel

"Pepper" Paire Davis

Baseball Adviser

Rod Dedeaux

Production Assistants

Jennifer Greenhut

Wendy S. Hallin

Gloria Mallah

Jim Weis

Kimberly Whitehead

Patty A. Willett

Cast

Tom Hanks

Jimmy Dugan

Geena Davis

Dottie Hinson

Lori Petty

Kit Keller

Madonna

Mae Mordabito

Rosie O'Donnell

Doris Murphy

Megan Cavanagh

Marla Hoach

Tracy Reiner

Betty Horn

Bitty Schram

Evelyn Gardner

Ann Cusack

Shirley Baker

Anne Elizabeth Ramsay

Helen Haley

Freddie Simpson

Ellen Sue Gotlander

Renee Coleman

Alice Gaspers

Robin Knight

"Beans" Babbitt

Patti Pelton

Marbleann Wilkenson

Kelli Simpkins

Beverly Dixon

Neezer Tarleton

Neezer Pounds-Taylor

Connie Calhoun

Kathleen Marshall

"Mumbles" Brockman

Sharon Schmidt

Vivian Ernst

Pauline Brailsford

Miss Cuthbert

David Strathairn

Ira Lowenstein

Garry Marshall

Walter Harvey

Jon Lovitz

Ernie Capadino

Bill Pullman

Bob Hinson

Justin Scheller

Stilwell

Eddie Jones

Dave Hooch

Alan Wilder

Nelson

R. M. Haley

Empathetic Umpire

Don Davis

Racine Coach Charlie

Janet Jones

Racine Pitcher

Brenda Ferrari

Racine Catcher

Tea Leoni

Racine 1B

Laurel Cronin

Maida Gillespie

Robert Stanton

Western Union Man

Wantland L. Sandel Jr

Doctor

Joe Krowka

Heckler

Harry Shearer

Newsreel Announcer

Blaire Baron

Margaret

Ryan Howell

Jeffrey

Brian Boru Gleeson

Bobby

David Franks

Vacuum Salesman

Ryan Olsen

Dollbody Kid

Ellie Weingardt

Charm School

Instructor

Larissa Collins

Charm School

Assistant

Douglas Blakeslee

Joseph Slotnick

Doris' Fans

Brian Flannery

Stephen Feagley

Autograph Kids

Rae Allen

Ma Keller

Gregory Sporleder



But not a new turn: Madonna

With the American baseball league disrupted by World War II, the candy-bar magnate Walter Harvey decides to sponsor an all-female version of the game. Ernie Capadino, his scout, tours the country to pick women for the selections to be held in Chicago. His brief is to find girls who are good at the game but who are also "easy on the eye". On a farm in Oregon, he comes across Dottie and her younger sister Kit; he picks Dottie but she refuses to go without her sister, and Ernie reluctantly agrees. When he rejects Marla, a hot-shot player who doesn't have the requisite good looks, Dottie and Kit protest, and they all head for Chicago.

At the trials, Dottie, Kit and Marla are selected to join the Rockford Peaches; other women in the team include Doris, Mae, Betty, Evelyn and Shirley, all with diverse backgrounds. After being kitted out in uniforms, and sent to charm school, the team finally meet their coach, Jimmy Dugan, a former baseball star who now has a drink problem. Their first game proves a disaster: Dottie has to take charge from the drunken Jimmy, and they are jeered by the handful of spectators. The Peaches later take to the road, accompanied by a chaperone, Miss Cuthbert, and Evelyn's young son Stilwell, who proves to be the bane of the Peaches' lives. The women play ball by day and at night try to fool Miss Cuthbert so they can sneak out to the local roadhouses.

At one such stop, Marla meets a beau, but the Peaches have yet to attract a following and there is talk of the league being disbanded. After the team appear on the cover of *Life* magazine, they start to attract fans (Mae proving to be a particular favourite), and Jimmy takes more of an interest in their playing. Marla surprises everyone by getting married and leaving the team. Dottie meanwhile excels on the diamond, and the Peaches reach the

top of the league. But with the war coming to an end, Harvey decides to abandon the league. His colleague, Ira Lowenstein, takes over, but relations between Dottie and Kit have become strained because Kit resents always being in her big sister's shadow. Much against her will, Kit is transferred to the Racine team.

Dottie's husband Bob returns from service, and Dottie plans to leave the team. She changes her mind to play with the Peaches in the World Series, where they are finally pitted against the Racines. Kit wins the game for her team and becomes a celebrity in her own right. The two sisters part amicably, as Dottie returns to Oregon with Bob while Kit stays in Chicago to play professionally. Jimmy is offered a job with a male team in Wichita, but decides to stay with the Peaches.

A *League of Their Own* was presumably pitched as a follow-up to the success of *Thelma & Louise*: here are not just two but a whole team of women proving that they can beat men at their own game, with chutzpah doyens Geena Davis and Madonna in the lead with support from a bright array of lesser-known talents. But the cast are ill-served by a script that ultimately fails to offer the women a new turn; even the one-liners from screenwriting duo Babaloo Mandel and Lowell Ganz (*Splash*, *Parenthood*, *City Slickers*) lack punch, and revealingly, their heart only seems to be in the character of Jimmy (Tom Hanks is hilarious as the sozzled and grouchy has-been, but he leaves the rest of the cast behind).

The story follows an imagined team, but within the context of the real history of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League that started up as the men went off to war. This is 'Rosie the Riveter' territory – an image conjured by a poster in the background of one scene – and the film subtly highlights some of the fears pro-

voked by this new-found liberty for women in both work and play. At one point, a spokeswoman for an eminent 'ladies' luncheon club' talks of the possible terrible consequences – that doing men's work might turn women into men. Consequently, members of the Women's Baseball teams are picked to be "easy on the eye", and then sent off to charm school to be taught to be 'lady-like'.

While all this is ripe for send-up, *A League of Their Own* offers only a token riposte to the past. Glamour, after all, is what this film is about too. Dottie and Kit vehemently protest when Ernie passes up the frumpy baseball dynamo Marla, but when she joins the team she becomes the film's pet joke. During one of the roadhouse nights out, Marla makes a spectacle of herself when she gets up and sings. Of course, she wins the heart of her soul-mate – the fat, bespectacled boy in the audience – and to everyone's amazement gets married. Exit Marla halfway through the film.

Elsewhere, *A League of Their Own* skates over what could have been potentially interesting material. At one point, when it seems that the league is about to be disbanded, the gutsy Mae breaks down and admits that she dreads returning to her previous miserable occupation as a go-go dancer. This brief glimpse into her past, which shows just how much the league changed the lives of the women involved, is a theme the film ignores in order to pursue lots of little sub-plots – Dottie and Kit's rivalry, Jimmy's fondness for the bottle, and the Peaches' struggle to win over the fans. The story dwindles away in unmitigated sentimentality as the girls get together for their reunion forty or so years on (at least Penny Marshall avoids the latex since she finds actresses who bear a remarkable resemblance to their younger selves). But the name of this game, unhappily, is softball.

Lizzie Francke

Mon père, ce héros

France 1991

Director: Gérard Lauzier

Certificate

PG

Distributor

Gala

Production Companies

Film Par Film/
DD Productions/
Orly Films/TF1 Films
In association with
Paravision
International
Canal +

Executive Producer

Jean-José Richer

Producer

Jean-Louis Livi

Production Co-ordinator

Marc Vade

Production Manager

Patrick Bordier

Casting

Françoise Menidrey

Assistant Directors

Marc Jany

Louana Grid

Screenplay

Gérard Lauzier

Director of Photography

Patrick Blossier

In colour

Editor

Georges Klotz

Set Design

Christian Marti

Music

François Bernheim

Music Extract

"Nocturne No.13, op.48,

No.1" by Frederic

Chopin

Music Arrangements

Dominique Perrier

Michel Bernholc

Songs

"Sans Mensonges"

by François Bernheim,

performed by Marie

Gillain; "Avec Elle

Avec Elle", "Sega" by

François Bernheim,

Jean-Pierre Lang,

performed by Jean-

Alain Clency; "Fun in

the Sun" by François

Bernheim, Janet

Woolacott, performed

by Slim Batteux;

"Quand un femme

tombe en amour"

by François Bernheim,

Jean-Pierre Lang,

performed by Karen

Tungay; "Ça Va (I'm

Fine)" by François

Bernheim, Pierre-

André Dousset, Slim

Batteux, performed

by Gérard Depardieu,

Bruce Johnson

Costume Design

Gil Noir

Costumer

Gilles Bodu

Chief Make-up Artists

Marianne Collette

Jackie Reynal

Make-up Artist

Delphine L'Eveillé

Sound Editors

Pierre Gamet

Paul Bertault

Sound Recordists

Alain Lachassagne

Christine Pansu

Sound Re-recorder

Gilbert Crozet

Sound Effects

Jérôme Levy

Cast

Gérard Depardieu

André

Marie Gillain

Véronique

Patrick Mille

Benjamin

Catherine Jacob

Chrystelle

Charlotte de Turckheim

Irina

Jean-François Rangesamy

Pablo

Koomaren Chetty

Karim

Evelyn Lagasse

Wealthy Woman

Benoît Allemane

Wealthy Man

Nicolas Sobrido

Maxime

Yan Brian

Benjamin's Father

Franck-Olivier Bonnet

Barman

Harriet Batchelor

Benjamin's Friend

Eric Berger

Julien

Gérard Herold

Patrick

9,334 feet

104 minutes

Subtitles

At fourteen-and-a-half, Véronique has reached a difficult age. Her parents are divorced and she lives with her mother, amid constant argument. Her father, André, takes her for a Christmas holiday in Mauritius, although preoccupied with his new love, Isabelle, who has suddenly disappeared on a business trip. When father and daughter arrive at their holiday hotel, Véro quickly attracts admirers of whom André disapproves. Embarrassed at being chaperoned, she pretends to Benjamin, a youth she meets while exploring the seashore, that André is a spy, an international adventurer and her lover, forcing her to lead a fugitive existence on the run from the police. Shocked, Benjamin spreads the news, and André soon begins to notice the other hotel guests behaving oddly towards him.

Convinced that Véro is being ►



Less Pauline, more Gidget: Gérard Depardieu, Marie Gillain

◀ courted by unsuitable men, he introduces her to Julien, a loquacious young intellectual whose only interest is politics, while Véro finds herself competing with Chrystelle, a lonely older woman, who clearly has designs on André. Increasingly interested in Benjamin, yet jealous of her father's plans for his new life with the elusive Isabelle, Véro's emotions are in a turmoil. She tells Benjamin she wants to escape from André's clutches, then relents what she has been saying about him. Reluctantly agreeing to play along with this unconventional role, her father looks suitably cowed when Benjamin demands that he give up Véro or face the police.

Benjamin plans for Véro to elope to safety with him, but has neglected to consult her first; when he does, she hastily creates a new story, that André has an incurable disease and she cannot abandon him in his dying months. After Véro openly shows her feelings for André as he performs a Chopin Nocturne at the grand piano, Benjamin decides he can intrude no longer on their relationship. He tells Véro they must not meet again until after André has been laid to rest. In a panic, Véro and André try to restore contact; firmly opposed by Benjamin's father, they nearly get arrested, and André has a fight at the hotel, where he is now treated with open contempt.

Véro gets into difficulties while wind-surfing; André swims out to rescue her but gets cramp and nearly drowns. He is briefly hospitalised, and in Véro's concern for him all pretence is dropped. Installed at a new hotel, they renew their campaign to win back Benjamin. The opportunity comes during a New Year's Eve dance: Julien has found a new girl who shares his political outlook, André has extricated himself from Chrystelle's clutches, and Véro and Benjamin are reunited on the dance floor and during the midnight celebrations. After giving permission for his daughter to accept a four-day cruise with Benjamin's family, André at last gets Isabelle on the phone. She is happy to accept his proposal that their first baby should be a girl.

● Briskly, almost breathlessly paced by crowd-pleaser Gérard

Lauzier, and engagingly photographed by Patrick Blossier (in notable contrast to his intense scrutinies in *La vengeance d'une femme*), *Mon père, ce héros* is dedicated to the teenage daughters of its director and star. The film concludes with fond farewells as the two generations set sail on their separate voyages and Gérard Depardieu, breaking a self-imposed rule that he would never sing for the cinema, delivers over the final credits an affectionate and acquiescent lyric about learning to live apart. Since the parent he has just po-trayed now intends, instead of maturing gracefully, to repeat the whole process with a new wife and daughter, this gently sentimental tone rings ominously hollow.

His plan for reconstructed parent-hood (complete, presumably, with the tensions that led to his first divorce) indicates that despite the lingering benedictions he actually hasn't learned his lesson at all. This is not, however, a film about reasoned characters and convincing context, nor – sadly – is it another tale of summer awakening in the manner of *La collectionneuse* or *Pauline à la plage*. While there are distant echoes of a decade of popular French cinema in which everything from Pinoteau's comedies to Gainsbourg's monologues seems to have orbited the twin themes of nymphetology and incest, the purpose here is sanitised humour in which awkward questions (about, for example, Véronique's inexhaustible supply of swimwear, or her failure to undress for bed) are superfluous to requirements.

More *Gidget* than *Wish You Were Here*, this bland seaside interlude is tolerable partly for the slender charm of Marie Gillain and more solidly for the ubiquitous Depardieu who, by resisting every temptation (bar a couple of brief outbursts) to overplay his hand, provides a remarkably solid core to the proceedings. Refusing to acknowledge by the slightest grimace that he is being tediously required to parody the balcony and letter-writing scenes from *Cyrano*, his melancholy patience in the teeth of challenging outbursts from both daughter and script provides a shining example from which any comic actor – and any parent – has plenty to learn.

Philip Strick

Montalvo et l'enfant (Montalvo and the Child)

France 1988

Director: Claude Mourieras

Distributor

BFI

Production Companies

La Sept/CDN
Productions/La Groupe
Emile Dubois/FR3/
INA/Le Cargo/TNDI
de Châteauevallon/
Théâtre de la Ville

Executive Producer

Gilles Sandoz

Production Associate

Robert Guediguian

Pre-production Supervisor

Jean-Yves Langlais

Assistant Directors

William Crespin
Marie Archambault
Olivier Bellery
Marion Geoffray
Maria Moutot
Eric Vašard

Screenplay

Claude Mourieras

Based on the dance

Pandora choreographed

by Jean Claude Gallotta

Director of Photography

Walther van den Ende

2nd Camera Operator

Benoît Nicoulin

Steadicam Operator

Jacques Monge

Video Post-production

Supervisor

Laurent Didier

Editor

Monique Dartonne

Set Design

Yves Cassagne

Music

Arvo Pärt
"Hor Ch'el e la Terra"
by Claudio Monteverdi

Songs

"Fenuca, Malaguena",
"Gallito De S. Lope",
"Hor Ch'el e la Terra"

by Claudio Monteverdi

Choreography

Jean Claude Gallotta

Costume Design

Yves Cassagne

Costumer

Pilou Lopez

Make-up

Maud Baron

Sound Editors

Francis Wagnier

Dominique Gaborieau

Cast/Dancers

Mathilde Altaraz

Christophe Delachaux

Robert Seyfried

Jean-Claude Gallotta

Michel Ducret

Marceline Bertolot

6,868 feet

76 minutes

● Dawn. A man runs across a railway bridge, pursued by another man. A child, Valerio, witnessing the chase calls out Montalvo's name and runs towards him, but Montalvo keeps running. He feels the man he is pursuing and kills him. The scene shifts to a squalid rural cabin where Montalvo is waking, dressing and shaving and Valerio is playing in the country lanes. Montalvo gives the child a lamb to care for but later slits its throat. The scene shifts again, this time to an urban working-class estate. Montalvo arrives



Part of the natural order?

on his bicycle and is joined by a party of local people who gather in front of one of the blocks to have their reunion recorded on video. Valerio will not talk to Montalvo but seeks the protection of his grandmother. Roberto, a more citified local inhabitant, invites Pandora to join the party. Inside the block, a feast is laid out and Valerio plays under the table and later becomes reconciled with Montalvo. Later the lamb is brought to the table, roasted whole, and Valerio, traumatised, runs out.

Meanwhile, Roberto and Pandora embrace and perform a highly charged sexual duet while the boy watches. Later, Montalvo joins them and the three perform a tug-of-war dance. Valerio clammers on to the roof but is rescued and comforted by Montalvo. Later, Valerio dreams of the idyllic time he spent with Montalvo, but his dream is punctuated by images of death. As the passion between Roberto and Pandora increases, Montalvo's jealousy is aroused and he rapes Pandora. She returns to Roberto, who is half-crazed because he thinks he has lost her, and he comforts her. Spurned by Valerio and unresponsive to his friends' attempts to calm him, Montalvo chases Roberto on to the railway tracks where, in a reprise of the opening scenes, he kills him. Valerio walks away down the tracks.

● Director Claude Mourieras and choreographer Jean Claude Galotta have collaborated with the intention of "showing dance not only as a form of entertainment but in itself". But it's unclear what this means or how they have contrived to achieve it. *Montalvo and the Child* opens like a piece of Italian neo-realist cinema in black-and-white and with minimal (and unsubtitled) dialogue. The sounds of the countryside are hot and lazy as Montalvo and the child go through the motions of rural bliss, Mourieras making much of the child's sweet face to portray innocent joy. The slaughter of the child's pet signals the onset of a rites-of-passage movie, and as the child becomes increasingly disillusioned

with his hero and mentor, Montalvo, his face registers the pain and difficulty of growing up.

But *Montalvo and the Child* changes pace and key when the triangular sexual conflict is established, mainly through energetic and aggressive dance scenes. The child becomes a bystander, both witness and voyeur, to adult passions and his loss of innocence is relegated to a sub-plot. Mourieras slowly allows the dance to pick up and then become the narrative. At the feast, the gestures and movement of the guests are in a recognisably exaggerated dance style which prepares the audience for the transformation of the council block into a derelict warehouse in which the three-cornered story unfolds in dance using a strong vocabulary of movement. The dancing is vigorous and noisy, with much shouting of names and sexually significant pre- and post-coital grunting. The music, by Estonian composer Arvo Pärt, is disappointing, verging on the sentimental with little of the Glass-inspired composition upon which his cult reputation is based.

But there is something new here, despite the banality of the plot and its undisguisedly macho elements. Mainstream dance films, of which there are many, either employ dance to punctuate and illustrate the plot, as in *West Side Story*, or to drive the plot, as in films like *The Red Shoes* or *Flashdance* where the hero/heroine is a dancer, or as pure entertainment, as in films like *Singin' in the Rain* or the Astaire/Rogers pictures. In its use of contemporary dance and its nod to the history of cinema, *Montalvo and the Child* falls outside the mainstream and has little film precedent. But it is in the end a hybrid that fails to satisfy either as dance or film. On the dance side, *Montalvo and the Child* is like an opera with too much recitatif. But it's on the film side that it is least satisfactory. Its knowing use of the neo-realist style (with snatches of Tarkovsky thrown in) seems at odds with the dance which, despite the best efforts of the choreographer, can never quite be seen as part of the natural order of things.

There is ample precedence for using dance as narrative – practically all classical ballet and much contemporary dance tells stories. Similarly, dance on film, in which the camera is used as part of the dance itself, is available every Saturday night in the BBC2 *Dancemakers* series. When the motion is slowed or the performance cut for the film or television medium, or when it is shot from above, below, through wide-angled lenses or when video effects are used to enhance the performance, then dance and film become one. (Michael Powell understood the relationship between the camera and dance a long time ago.) But the recent opportunity to see Martha Graham, performing in front of a static camera on an ancient piece of film in the *Dancemakers* series, was a more stirring experience than anything in *Montalvo and the Child*.

Jill McGreal

My Father Is Coming

Germany/USA 1991

Director: Monika Treut

Certificate

18

Distributor

Out On a Limb

Production Companies

Hyäne Filmproduktion

(Hamburg)/Hyena

Films (New York)

With financial

assistance from

Hamburger Filmbüro

Producer

Monika Treut

Co-producer

NDR Hamburg

Line Producers

Bluehorse Films Inc

Ulla Zwicker-Ritz

Nicole Ma

Production Co-ordinators

Office:

Lorna Johnson

Hamburg/NY:

Thomas Hemstede

Unit Manager

Kate Ingham

Assistant Director

Christine LeGoff

Screenplay

Monika Treut

Bruce Benderson

Additional Dialogue

Sarah Schulman

Director of Photography

Elfi Mikesch

Colour

TVC

Editor

Steve Brown

Art Director

Robin Ford

Music

David Van Tieghem

Music Producer

Roma Baran

Wardrobe

Debbie Pastor

Make-up

Leslie Lowe

Titles

just...

Sound Editor

Anni Klose

Sound Recordists

Neil Danziger

Richard Borowski

Production Assistants

Isabelle Heereman

Philip Alvensleben

Cast

Alfred Edel

Hans

Shelley Kästner

Vicky

Annie Sprinkle

Annie

Mary Lou Graulau

Lisa

David Bronstein

Ben

Michael Massee

Joe

Fakir Musafar

Fakir

Mario de Colombia

Singer

Dominique Gaspar

Christa

Flora Gaspar

Dora

Israel Marti

Tito

Bruce Benderson

Allen

Rebecca Lewin

Talkshow Hostess

Stephen Feld

Agent

Charles-John Austen

Restaurant Manager

Fidel Howden

Taxi Driver

Mariana Diaz

Tito's Aunt

Lynne Tillman

Guest

Susan McLeod

Street Crazy

Ursula Molinaro

Woman on Street

Amanda Ma

Asian Actress

Kat Lane

Receptionist

Katrina Kaninchen

A.D.

Tracy Gale Norman

Drag Queen

Bobby Baden

Russian Bartender

Michael Waits

Bartender at Eileen's

7,282 feet

81 minutes

Filmed in English

Vicky, a German woman who shares her New York apartment with a gay man, Ben, is trying to find work as an actress and break into commercials. In the meantime, she is working as a waitress in a restaurant where Lisa, a Puerto Rican, is cook. Her life is complicated by the arrival from Germany of her father, Hans, whom she has told that she is married and to whom she has given the impression that her acting career is burgeoning. On the way to Vicky's apartment, Hans runs into two friends of his daughter's, Christa and Dora, Hungarian sisters who run a sex chatline.

On Vicky's return from the restaurant, Hans presents her with a vacuum cleaner, and meets Ben who has agreed to play the part of her husband. When Hans accompanies Vicky to her audition the next day, he is shocked to find that it is for a sex film. Vicky fails the audition for the show's producer and star, Annie Sprinkle, but while waiting

for her, Hans is pressed into auditioning for a commercial and is given the job. He also meets Annie when he seeks refuge in the women's toilet.

While she is waiting for her father, Vicky is approached by Joe, a friend of Annie's who offers her a lift. They later visit a bar where the taciturn Joe's display of a tattoo turns the conversation to the body and self-presentation. Hans meanwhile makes his way to Annie's apartment, where she shows him a video of a female-to-male transsexual, who turns out to be Joe. Annie gives Hans a relaxing massage. Back at their apartment, Ben breaks the news to Vicky that he is moving in with his Latin lover, Tito. Vicky feels a failure, but none the less accompanies Ben, Tito and Lisa to the 'Latin night' at a club where she has been given a guest spot as a singer.

Later that night, her father returns to the apartment to find Vicky in bed with Lisa, and leaves. Joe later tells Vicky about his sex-change operation, overcoming his fear of rejection in the process, and she reassures him. Returning to her apartment, Vicky finds a message on the answerphone telling her that she has been fired from the restaurant. She is spotted in the bar by her father, who proffers the money he has earned from the commercial. Vicky and Annie subsequently see him off for the airport. Joe discovers Vicky and Lisa in bed together, but Vicky reassures him. On leaving the apartment, Vicky is approached by an older woman, and they walk off together, wordlessly.

The best moment in *My Father Is Coming* occurs early on, as Vicky, auditioning for the part of a German tourist, is required to order in a Chinese restaurant. "More arrogant!" demands the casting director, then finally, "Think Nazi!" "You must give me my shrimps now!" responds the desperate Vicky. Elsewhere, the not altogether novel notion of parodying the German stereotype is embodied principally in the figure of her father Hans – paunchy, middle-aged, with his plastic bag of wurst and his bourgeois morality. He trails a particular burden of historical guilt, glumly listening to the tale of one of the Hungarian sisters about lunch with a German suitor where the salad was decorated with a swastika, or being berated by a German Jew demanding to know what he did in the war.

The double entendre in the film's title evokes the German soft-core sex farce, so that it becomes sadly inevitable that Hans will blunder on Vicky's first night in bed with Lisa, and succumb swiftly to Annie's blandishments following some dubious business in the ladies' toilet with a spilt can of Coca-Cola. Vicky too is a tourist of sorts, the stereotypical immigrant waitress with dramatic aspirations, surrounded by the supposedly zany exponents of New York's *laissez-faire* sexual morality.

Monika Treut has used both documentary and fiction in the past to



Notions of choice: Shelley Kästner

explore questions of sexuality, and has shown a preoccupation with the sex industry, sado-masochism and transsexualism. Julia Knight has talked of her characters' "freedom to choose" in matters of sexuality, seeing in this the structuring principle of her narratives. Unhappily, *My Father Is Coming* offers neither a realist documentary nor a celebration. In Shelley Kästner's passive and understated performance, Vicky is, like her father, something of an innocent abroad, and the object of others' desires (Lisa approaches her after her current girlfriend's infidelity comes to light; Joe seeks in her confirmation of his tenuous sense of identity).

Although Lisa and Vicky are shown comfortably in bed together, the effect of "coming with a woman and coming out to your father at the same time", as one of the sisters puts it, is hardly joyful. Interestingly, Treut's film seems to condemn rather than celebrate the effects of implementing consumerist notions of choice within the field of sexuality. Throughout, sexuality is presented merely as a set of particular behaviours unrelated to a larger notion of the person. Any disquiet about the heroine's tentative steps in this polymorphously perverse world crystallise around the character of Joe, manically played by Michael Massee as an intense poseur, an escapee from the two-dimensional world of the television commercial. He is the film's sole source of drama, but Treut, who can best be described as a routine realist, is not the director to do him justice.

Verina Glaessner

Prague

United Kingdom/France 1991

Director: Ian Sellar

Certificate

12

Distributor

Winstone

Production Companies

Christopher Young
Films (London)/
Constellation-UGC-
Hachette Première
(Paris)

In association with
BBC Films
British Screen
Canal +
The Scottish Film
Production Fund

Producer

Christopher Young

Co-producer

Claudie Ossard

Associate Producer

David Brown

Production Supervisor

Jan Balzer

Production Co-ordinators

Sara Barr
London:

Francesca Robertson
Paris:

Sylvie Lenoir

Production Managers

Oldrich Mach
Constellation:

Michelle Arnould
Location Manager

Petr Moravech

Casting

UK:

Gail Stevens

Czechoslovakia:

Wrestlers:

Pierre-Jacques

Benichou

Advice:

Mary Selway

Assistant Directors

Guy Travers

Jiri Ostry

Alice Ronovska

James Bloom

Screenplay

Ian Sellar

Director of Photography

Darius Khondji

Colour

Eastman Colour

Camera Operators

Agnes Godard

2nd Unit:

Martin Grosup

Editor

John Bloom

Associate Editor

Paul Hodgson

Production Designer

Jiri Matolin

Art Directors

Martin Maly

Michael Krska

Music

Jonathan Dove

Costume Design

Evelyne Francois-

Correard

Wardrobe Supervisor

Petra Jachymova

Make-up Artists

Paul De Fisser

Eva Vypelova

Titles/Opticals

The Optical

Partnership

Sound Editors

Jonathan Bates

Dialogue:

Michael Crouch

Sound Recordists

Colin Nicholson

Music:

Keith Grant

Gerry O'Riordan

Gary Thomas

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists

Robin O'Donoghue

Cast

Alan Cumming

Alexander Novak

Sandrine Bonnaire

Elena

Bruno Ganz

Josef

Raphael Meiss

Wrestler Ralph

Henri Meiss

Wrestler Paul

Hana Gregorova

Jana, Archivist

Ladislav Lahoda

Policeman

Nelly Gaierova

Woman

Luba Skorepova

Neighbour

Zdena Kecalikova

Train Cleaner

Lubos Kafka

Boatman

Jaroslav Jodl

Vaults Cleaner

Olga Michalkova

Projectionist

Ladislav Brothnek

Barman

Peter Lepsa

Grandfather

Lenka Pesatova

Grandmother

Barbora Sanova

Little Girl

Petr Jirasek

Pavel Jirasek

Boys

Jana Sedova

Old Woman

Zdenek Srstka

Rail Worker

Jiri Zeman

Doorman

Alena Dlouha

Woman at Desk

Helena Kaclova

Dancer in Bar

8,011 feet

89 minutes

Young Scot Alexander Novak arrives in Prague early one morning, and finds himself immediately drawn to the city as he wanders through the deserted streets. Although rushing to the aid of an apparently drowning stray dog leaves his clothes soaked, he makes his way to the Czech National Film Archive to meet with research officer Elena and explain to her the reason for his visit. He is looking for a section of 1941 newsreel footage he hopes will clear up certain questions about his background: his mother eventually settled in Scotland, but the key to the fate of her family lies in an incident she remembered from the war. She could recollect seeing relatives in the water near a bridge here, and believed that what happened to them was captured on film.

Elena and Alexander visit the location of his mother's family home, where they find that a more modern apartment block has been built in its place. Alexander reveals that his grandfather and the family had jumped into the river in an effort to evade transportation to the camps. An appointment the following day brings news from archive head Josef that the requested piece of film could prove difficult to trace, but in the meantime a trip to a wrestling match with Elena brings their mutual attraction to the surface and they become lovers. Increasingly impatient to see the film, Alexander spends the weekend in the country with Josef and Elena, and is somewhat dismayed to find that they are already involved.

Having announced to a dazed Alexander that she is about to have his baby, Elena at last uncovers the elusive footage and delivers the can of film to him. It is too late on a Friday afternoon, however, for him to view it, and that evening another mishap, involving an interfering canine and a carelessly dropped match, results in the destruction of the flammable nitrate stock. Alexander is devastated by the loss, but Elena describes the contents to him: while being held at gunpoint by the Nazi-backed local militia, his grandfather was shouting, "Save her! save her!", because his daughter, Alexander's mother, had been washed away downstream. Some unknown hand must have rescued her, it transpires, and as he embraces Elena, Alexander wishes that their child will become exactly that sort of person.

While Ian Sellar's debut feature *Venus Peter* ventured into an island Scots boyhood to chart the weathering of innocence by experience, this more ambitious successor undertakes a journey through twentieth-century history to mark a young man's passage from naivety to maturity. Alexander Novak sets out to construct a past for himself from the missing pieces he believes he'll find in the Czech capital. The fact that his mother's childhood home has gone, and that the much sought-after piece of film is fated to go up in smoke before he ever sees it, would seem to



Linked to the European experience: Alan Cumming, Sandrine Bonnaire...

frustrate Novak's fact-finding mission. Yet it is precisely through the overturning of his expectations that his interior journey is pushed forward.

His first meeting with archive chief Josef gives a hint of what is to come. Josef recalls a film he once saw of some cows obliviously grazing away while a rocket attack destroyed the town behind them, and adds, apropos Eastern Europe's recent democratic alignment, that "in this New World we are all inextricably tied together". Following a similar pattern, Alexander's would-be simple project of self-definition finally turns up a far richer nexus of personal and public interconnections. On an intimate level, for instance, after falling for the elusive Elena, Alexander declares that he wants her "all for himself". Yet he has to come to terms with the discovery that she's Josef's lover, and that she can have his child outside of a stable relationship with him.

In a much wider context, at a moment when the concept of an independent Scotland in Europe has become part of the currency of political debate, *Prague's* narrative presents a young Scot, tangibly linked to the European experience of the Holocaust and the legacy of Communism, rethinking his own identity. These are issues of genuine scope, and *Prague* could hardly be further from the inward-looking, doom-laden realist school of Scottish, or even British filmmaking. Appropriately, Sellar's resourceful producer Christopher Young – who crucially managed to persuade Orkney Council to invest in *Venus Peter* – has supplemented the usual homegrown sources of finance (British Screen, the BBC, The Scottish Film Production Fund) with a far-sighted deal involving French producer Claudie Ossard and her Constellation company, responsible for such stylish art-house successes as *Betty Blue* and *Delicatessen*.

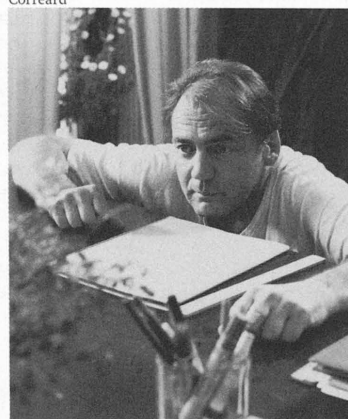
Bringing together bankable European stars Bruno Ganz and Sandrine Bonnaire, and shot in trademark golden tones by cinematographer Darius Khondji (fresh from the Jeunet and Caro extravaganza), *Prague* has a determinedly Continental feel to it. In tone

too, there's as much Jiri Menzel here as, say, Bill Forsyth. With disarmingly benign apartment-dwelling old dears, and bluff railwaymen unexpectedly bursting into an English chorus of "Happy Birthday to You", the film displays a light touch and a willingness to think the best of people. It pokes not unexpected fun at the ex-state bureaucracy's labyrinthine muddle, but through idiosyncratic detail (a huge mutt collapsed on a beer-sticky dance floor, a chance sensual encounter underneath the stands at a wrestling contest) also conjures a small universe of magical unpredictability.

Yet if Sellar's command of the individual moment has an enticing delicacy, his grasp of the broader reach of the narrative is rather less secure. The city itself may be fascinatingly rendered – all tramcars by night and cobble squares – but in leaving the protagonist to sort out the various historical and romantic complications for himself, Sellar tends to leave the audience a little adrift too. Alan Cumming's Novak also seems a little too much the wide-eyed innocent to convince us that a capable customer like Elena would have much to do with him. And even if it is partly a question of nationality, Bonnaire and Ganz do appear to have been imposed on their roles from above rather than truly inhabiting them.

Set in motion by the awkwardly handled slapstick incineration of the newsreel, the final sequence combines three elements in a gesture of international togetherness that probably worked better on paper than it does on screen. Novak and Elena's embrace, the abandoned film can, and Josef singing a folk tune he had earlier taught Alexander: the trio of images follow in succession, but given the film's lack of emotional pull and its inability (or unwillingness?) to establish a clear future for all concerned, the effect is somehow hollow. But if we've learned anything in the previous eighty-odd minutes, it's to trust in one of the archive assistant's passing comments: "The way people look for things is more important than what they find".

Trevor Johnston



...Bruno Ganz

Rapid Fire

USA 1992

Director: Dwight H. Little

Certificate

18

Distributor

20th Century Fox

Production Company

20th Century Fox

Executive Producers

Gerald Olson

John Fasano

Producer

Robert Lawrence

Associate Producer

Barry Berg

Production Associates

Chris Bardin

David Eichler

Production Co-ordinator

Yoli Poropat

Unit Production Manager

Barry Berg

Location Manager

Gerrit Folsom

2nd Unit Director

Gerald Olson

Casting

Richard Pagano

Sharon Bialy

Debi Manwiller

Voice:

Barbara Harris

Assistant Directors

Denis Stewart

John Isabeau

Brian Faul

Bryan Dresden

Screenplay

Alan McElroy

Story

Cindy Cirile

Alan McElroy

Director of Photography

Ric Waite

Colour

DeLuxe

Camera Operators

A:

Chris Schwiabert

B:

Eric Anderson

2nd Unit:

Don Fauntleroy

Opticals

Cinema Research

Corporation

Line-up:

Clayton R. Marsh

Animation Artist

Jay Johnson

Editor

Gib Jaffe

Production Designer

Ron Foreman

Art Director

Charles Butcher

Set Design

Natalie Richards

Set Decorator

Leslie Frankenheimer

Storyboard Artist

Matt Golden

Special Effects Co-ordinator

Dick Wood

Special Effects Foreman

Joe Mercurio

Music

Christopher Young

Synthesizers/Electronic

Percussion

Mark Zimoski

Daniel Licht

Orchestrations

Christopher Young

Supervising Music Editor

Thomas Milano

Music Co-ordinator

Carol Sue Baker

Songs

"Can't Find My Way"

by Johnny Gioeli, Joey

Gioeli, Neal Schon,

"I'll Be There" by Neal

Schon, Johnny Gioeli,

Joey Gioeli, Jonathan

Caine, performed

by Hardline

Costume Design

Erica Edell Phillips

Costume Supervisors

Bob Iannaccone

Amy Stofsky

Costumers

Victoria J. Snow

Michael J. Voght

Key Make-up Artist

Ben Nye Jnr

Make-up Artist

Jill Rockow

Title Design

Wayne Fitzgerald

Titles

Hollywood Title

Services

Supervising Sound Editor

Richard E. Yawn

Sound Editors

Hector Gika

Glenn Hoskinson

Don Warner

Anthony Milch

John Kwiatkowski

Allan Bromberg

Rocky Moriana Jnr

Supervising ADR Editor

Holly Huckins

ADR Editors

Becky Sullivan

Greg Brown

Laura Graham

Lee Lamont

Supervising Foley Editors

Scott D. Jackson

Leslie Gaulin

Foley Editors

Shawn Sykora

Steven J. Schwalbe

Sound Recordists

Rob Janiger

Larry Hoki

Music:

Bernie Kirsh

Additional:

Armin Kirsh

Larry Mah

ADR Recordists

Bob Baron

David C. McDonald

Foley Recordist

Gary Hecker

Dolby stereo

Consultant:

Douglas Greenfield

Supervising Sound

Re-recordist

Jeffrey Perkins

Sound Re-recordists

Allen L. Stone

Kurt Kassulke

Sound Effects

Co-ordinators

John Michael Fanaris

Tobie Jackson

Blake Marion

Sound Effects

Gary Blufur

Foley Artists

Jeff Wilhoit

Chris Moriana

Music Consultant

Dawn Soler

Production Assistants

Peter Brown

Kris Cagan

Melissa Flanigan

Charlie Graham

Sarah Netburn

Michael Pitt

Paul Schuyler

Jay Smith

Art Department:

Peter Dudar

2nd Unit:

Amy Hadzima

Stunt Co-ordinator

Jeff Imada

Stunts

Pete Antico

Bob Arnold

Rick Avery

Pat Banta

Chino Binamo

Jeff Bornstein

Steve Boyum

Tony Brubaker

Jeff Cadiente

Frank P. Calzavara



No exorcism: Brandon Lee

John Casino

John Cenatiempo

Carl Ciarfallo

Darryl Chan

George Cheung

Phil Chong

Charles Croughwell

Mark Cuttin

Tim Davison

Mark Dealessandro

Nick Dimitri

Eddy Donno

Larry Duran

Chris Durand

Ellarye

Ken Endoso

Ed Fernandez

Frank Ferrara

Jim Fierro

Lorenzo Gaspar

Al Goto

Freddie Hice

Hank Hooker

Norman Howell

Tom Huff

Brian Imada

Shinko Isobe

Bobby Itaya

Roger Ito

Steven Ito

Matt Johnston

Jim Jue

Nathan Jung

Henry Kingi Jnr

Henry Kingi Snr

Barbara Anne Klein

Peter Lai

Gene LeBell

Danny Lee

Leo Lee

Rick Lefevour

Willie Leong

Fred Lerner

James Lew

Stacy Logan

Steve Martinez

Cole McKay

John C. Meier

Sandy Mukal

Donna Noguchi

Danny O'Haco

Gerald Okamura

Frank Orsatti

Linda Perlin

Manny Perry

Charles Picerni Snr

Chuck Picerni Jnr

Steve Picerni

Richard Piedmont

Randy Popplewell

Stuart Quan

Vernon Rieta

J.P. Romano

George Marshall Ruge

Bill Ryusaki

Bill Saito

Steve Santosusso

Russell Solberg

Jill Terashita

Gary Toy

Randy Toyota

Tierre Turner

Andre Veluzat

Renaud Veluzat

Ric Roman Waugh

Jeff Williams

Curtis F. Wong

Danny Wong

Eddie Wong

Merritt Yohnka

Roger Yuan

Dick Ziker

Joel Zolin

Fight Choreography

Brandon Lee

Jeff Imada

Cast

Brandon Lee

Jake Lo

Powers Boothe

Mace Ryan

Nick Mancuso

Antonio Serrano

Ramond J. Barry

Agent Stuart

Kate Hodge

Karla Withers

Tzi Ma

Kinman Tau

Tony Longo

Brunner Gazzi

Michael Paul Chan

Carl Chang

Single White Female

USA 1992

Director: Barbet Schroeder

Certificate

18
Distributor
Columbia TriStar
Production Company
Columbia Pictures
Executive Producer
Jack Baran
Producer
Barbet Schroeder

Co-producer
Roger Joseph Pugliese
Associate Producer
Susan Hoffman
Production Co-ordinator
Elyse Katz

Production Office
Co-ordinator
New York:
Jane Nerlinger Evans

Unit Production Managers
Roger Joseph Pugliese
New York:
Judith Stevens

Screenplay
Don Roos
Based on the novel *SWF*
Seeks Same by John Lutz

Director of Photography
Luciano Tovoli

Colour
Technicolor
Camera Operator
Monty Rowan

Editor
Lee Percy

Production Designer

Milena Canonero
Art Director
P. Michael Johnston
Set Design
Cosmos A. Demetriou
Set Decorator
Anne H. Ahrens
Scenic Artist
New York:
Jim Sorice

Special Effects
Eddie Etan Surkin
Music
Howard Shore

Music Extract
"Trio Sonata in C, RV
60" by Antonio Vivaldi,
performed by the
Purcell Quartet

Orchestrations
Homer Denison
Music Editor
Jim Weidman

Songs
"Sadness Part I" by
Curly MC, F. Gregorian,
David Fairstein,
performed by Enigma;

"The Way You Make Me
Feel" by Dave King,
Mandy Meyer,
performed by
Katmandu; "Rhythm
of Time" by Daniel
Bresanutti, Patrick
Codenys, Jean Luc De
Meyer, Richard JK,
performed by Front
242; "State of
Independence"
by Vangelis, Jon
Anderson, performed
by Moodswings,
featuring Chrissie
Hynde

Wardrobe

Supervisor:
Eileen Kennedy
Jacqueline
De La Fontaine
New York Supervisor:
Ingrid Price

Make-up

Lizbeth Williamson
New York:
Fern Buchner

Special Make-up Effects
Matthew W. Mungle
Title Design
Robert Dawson

Opticals
Cinema Research
Corporation
Sound Design
Gary Rydstrom

Supervising Sound Editors
Tim Holland
Gloria S. Borders
Sound Editors
Don Hall

Ken Fischer
Ethan Van Der Ryn
Bob Shoup
Marilyn McCoppen
Gwendolyn
Yates-Whittle

E. Jeanne Putnam
Supervising ADR Editor
Rob Fruchtmann
Sound Recordists
Petur Hliddal

Music:
Joel Moss
New York:
Frank Stettner
Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists
Tom Johnson
Gary Rydstrom
Richard Beggs

Foley
Taj Soundworks
Medical Consultant
Dr Michael I. Gold

Production Assistants
Office:
Steven Scott Kurland
Adam Cook

Set:
Matthew Levine
Jessie L. McBride
Stunt Co-ordinator
Edward J. Ulrich

Stunts

Joni Avery
Jamie Jo Medearis
Animal Trainer
Sled Reynolds

Cast

Bridget Fonda
Allison Jones
Jennifer Jason Leigh
Hedra Carlson
Steven Weber
Sam Rawson

Peter Friedman
Graham Knox
Stephen Tobolowsky
Mitchell Myerson
Frances Bay
Elderly Neighbour

Michele Farr
Myerson's Assistant
Tara Karsian
Mannish Applicant
Christiana Capetillo
Exotic Applicant

Jessica Lundy
Talkative Applicant
Rene Estevez
Perfect Applicant
Tiffany Mataras
Krystle Mataras

Twins
Amelia Campbell
Cheque Cashier
Ken Tobey
Desk Clerk

Eric Poppick
Nosy Neighbour
Kim Sykes
TV Reporter
Michael James Collins
Cashier Manager

George Gerdes
Super
Jerry Mayer
News Vendor
Robert Martin Steinberg
Hedra's Date

Leslie A. Sank
Woman in Club
Ron Athey
Bartender
Kaaren Boothroyd
Bookstore Customer

Jack Wilson
Man in Cage

9,696 feet
108 minutes

Allie Jones, a successful young woman living in Manhattan, has just started her own computer programming business and is about to marry her boyfriend Sam. But when she discovers that he is still sleeping with his ex-wife, she throws him out and advertises for a room-mate. She decides on the shy young Hedra (Hedy), who has just arrived in the city; the two get on well together, and when Sam tries to contact Allie, Hedy erases his phone messages. When Hedy returns to the apartment one evening with a puppy, Allie demands that she take it back, but then recants and forms an attachment to the dog. Sam later turns up to beg Allie's forgiveness; they go to a hotel where they make love and decide to get engaged again.

Hedy is later furious at Allie for not telling her where she was, and also upset that she may now have to move out. Sam starts to fix up the balcony in the apartment so that the dog can go outside; but Allie later returns to find that the animal has fallen to its death, and Hedy blames herself since she interrupted Sam before he could complete the job. When one of Allie's clients, Mitchell Myerson, makes a pass at her and tries to rape her, Allie plans to do nothing about it, but Hedy phones Myerson, pretending to be Allie, and threatens him. Hedy takes Allie to the hairdresser to cheer her up, and Allie is astonished when Hedy copies her hair cut and colour exactly.

Increasingly uneasy, Allie finds evidence in Hedy's room that this isn't really her name and that she had a twin sister who drowned when they were nine. Later that night, Hedy goes out dressed in Allie's clothes; Allie fol-

lows her to a night-club where she sees her with a man who resembles Sam. Allie asks for advice from her best friend, Graham, who lives upstairs; but their conversation is overheard through the building's air ducts by Hedy, who later attacks Graham and leaves him for dead. Allie tells Hedy that it is time for her to move out; but Hedy later takes a call from Sam, and goes to his hotel dressed as Allie. Sam makes love to her, thinking she is Allie, and Hedy then kills him.

When she hears the news the next day, and finds Hedy's clothes covered in blood, Allie confronts her. Hedy overpowers her and leaves her tied up in Graham's flat. When Myerson appears in the building, after the computer programme that Allie designed for him has gone haywire, Hedy shoots him. Graham, it turns out, is still alive, but Allie forces Hedy to write her own suicide note. Allie tricks her and escapes into the basement, where a struggle ensues between the two and Allie finally kills Hedy. Allie subsequently discovers that Hedy's disturbed state was the result of her mistaken belief that she had killed her twin.

Single White Female starts in the classifieds – the jumping-off point also for *Desperately Seeking Susan*. Susan Seidelman's film nodded, in turn, to Jacques Rivette's *Celine and Julie Go Boating*, produced by Barbet Schroeder. The wheel now comes full circle, for Schroeder's new film as director is a dark and sour version of Seidelman's celebratory mid-80s romp, in which the uptight suburban girl was let loose in Manhattan to go in search of Susan and self – sharing



Spellbinding: Bridget Fonda, Jennifer Jason Leigh

boyfriends, jackets and identities on the way. Here Allie and Hedy are entwined in a similar but far more desperate search.

The opening shot, filmed on faded stock, sets up the twinning and duality theme that is played throughout the film, as two identical little girls toy with their mother's make-up. They look straight into camera as if they can see their reflection. But the questions of identity that arise here are self-consciously posed as much in terms of cinema as via any simplistic idea of the 'mirror phase'. Schroeder takes us through the looking-glass into a murky noir-ish world that evokes many movie antecedents - *Persona*, the sibling-slaying at the root of Hitchcock's *Spellbound*, the role-swapping and spiritual vampirism of Altman's *3 Women*.

Hedy is even something of a film buff, who gazes late at night at such fare as *In a Lonely Place* and *Vertigo* (or a shot from something that we are supposed to think is *Vertigo*, but may actually be Stewart and Novak in *Bell, Book and Candle*). Everything in this film is lit in bruised blacks and browns, damaged and sad. Allie's apartment is in a cavernous and decaying complex, complete with a hellish inferno of a basement in which the final confrontation takes place. If all this seems too much like familiar territory, *Single White Female* does reverse some expectations. There is a gleeful sense of a director trying to trump a Hollywood formula, with such grimly humorous and knowing touches as the *Maitresse*-like high heels that Allie encourages Hedy to buy and which eventually make for an unlikely murder weapon (Hedy stilettoes Sam through the eye).

But the central twist to the convention is that the women here are not so easily split into good sister/bad sister - the saintly Allie and the monstrous Hedra (Hydra?) - as most recently and crassly manifest in *The Hand that Rocks the Cradle*. Instead, there is a constant slipping and sliding between the two personas: it is the inquisitive Allie who first secretly steals into Hedy's room to poke about in her room-mate's things. Thus a mutual and guilty fascination is established between the two which Hedy takes to the extreme. Their relationship is edgy, a meeting-point for each other's insecurities which are sympathetically teased out before they eventually explode.

"I've never met anyone so scared of being a woman", says Hedy at one point of Allie. Indeed, while Allie seems enviably glamorous, strong and powerful, it is still the mousey Hedy who tornadoes in to deal the real blow to the lizard-like Myerson. Hedy might just be right about Sam, too, when she suggests at one point to Allie that he will betray her again. "I'm the strong sister now", cries Allie as she dashes from Hedy's grasp. Allie is forced to confront all those anxieties that she keeps locked away in the cellar and battle them through, leaving the husk of her other self buried. Self-realisation was never so traumatic or cruel.

Lizzie Francke

Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me

USA 1992

Director: David Lynch

Certificate

18

Distributor

Guild

Production Company

Twin Peaks

Productions

Executive Producers

Mark Frost

David Lynch

Producer

Gregg Fienberg

Co-producer

John Wentworth

Associate Producers

Johanna Ray

Tim Harbert

Production Controller

Nowell B. Grossman

Production Co-ordinators

Supervisor:

Joseph Montrone

Seattle:

Heather Terzieff

Unit Production Manager

Gregg Fienberg

Post-production

Co-ordinator

Elizabeth Fox

Casting

Johanna Ray

Associate:

Elaine J. Huzzar

Voice:

Barbara Harris

Extras:

Tony Hobbs

Seattle:

Susan Dixon

Heidi L. Walker Casting

Extras Seattle:

White Light Casting

Assistant Directors

Deepak Nayar

Richard Oswald

Bill Jennings

Screenplay

David Lynch

Robert Engels

Director of Photography

Ron Garcia

Panavision

Colour

CFI

Additional Photography

Sean Doyle

Steadicam Operators

Dan Kneese

Bruce Greene

Video Displays

Video Image

Monte Swann

Editor

Mark Sweeney

Production Designer

Patricia Norris

Set Decorator

Leslie Morales

On-set Dresser

Mike Malone

Scenic Artist

Dave Robinson

Special Effects

Co-ordinator

Robert E. McCarthy

Special Effects

L.A.:

Wizards, Inc

Gunter Simon

Sabrina McCarthy

Del Reahm

Seattle:

Riggs Production

Associates

Terry Shattuck

Darrell Pritchett

Music/Music Director

Angelo Badalamenti

Music Extract

"Requiem in C Minor"

by Luigi Cherubini,

performed by The

Ambrosian Singers,

Philharmonia

Orchestra

Music Performed by

Piano:

Angelo Badalamenti

David Slusser

Synthesizer:

Kinny Landrum

Angelo Badalamenti

Bass:

Buster Williams

Ron Carter

Rufus Reed

William Fairbanks

Drums:

Grady Tate

Donald Bailey

Guitars:

Vinnie Bell

Dave Alvin

Bob Rose

Myles Boisen

Saxophone:

Al Regni

Trumpet:

Jim Hynes

Vibraphone:

Jay Hoggard

David Cooper

Orchestrations

Angelo Badalamenti

Music Editor

Lori L. Eschler

Songs

"She Would Die for

Love", "Falling" by

David Lynch, Angelo

Badalamenti; "Moving

through Time" by

Angelo Badalamenti;

"Sycamore Trees" by

David Lynch, Angelo

Badalamenti,

performed by Little

Jimmy Scott; "A Real

Indication", "The Black

Dog Runs at Night" by

David Lynch, Angelo

Badalamenti,

performed by Thought

Gang; "Deer Meadow

Shuffle", "Double R

Swing", "Best Friends"

by David Lynch, David

Slusser; "Questions in a

World of Blue" by

David Lynch, Angelo

Badalamenti,

performed by Julee

Cruise; "Blue Frank",

"The Pink Room" by

David Lynch; "Love

Theme", "The Voice of

Love" by Angelo

Badalamenti

Costume Design

Patricia Norris

Costume Supervisor

Amy Stofsky

Costumer

Cheri Reed

Make-up Artist

Katharina Hirsch-

Smith

Titles/Opticals

Pacific Title

Sound Design

David Lynch

Supervising Sound Editor

Douglas Murray

Sound Editors

Claire Freeman

Mark Levinson

Joseph Jett Sally

Dialogue:

Teresa Ekton

ADR Editors

Teresa Ekton

Hugh Waddell

Sound Recordists

Frank Canonica

Dan Olmsted

Jon Huck

Charlene E. Hamer

Music:

Art Pohlemus



The way we were before: Grace Zabriskie, Sheryl Lee, Ray Wise

ADR Recordists

Dean Drabin

Backwards:

John Huck

Dolby stereo

Foley Editor

Malcolm Fife

Sound Re-recordists

David Parker

Michael Semanick

David Lynch

Sound Effects Editors

Donny Blank

James LeBrechte

Richard Davis

Foley Artists

Margie O'Malley

Jennifer Myers

Production Assistants

Graig MacLachlan

John Scimmenti

Robert Price

Kevin Young

Andrew Durham

Christine Mathews

Nate "Sam" Lottsfeld

Katherine Marie

Keithly

Corrina Carrion

Stunt Co-ordinator

Jeff Smolek

Cast

Sheryl Lee

Laura Palmer

Ray Wise

Leland Palmer

Mädchen Amick

Shelly Johnson

Dana Ashbrook

Bobby Briggs

Phoebe Augustine

Ronette Pulaski

David Bowie

Phillip Jeffries

Eric DaRae

Leo Johnson

Miguel Ferrer

Albert Rosenfeld

Pamela Gidley

Teresa Banks

Heather Graham

Annie Blackburn

Chris Isaak

Special Agent Chester

Desmond

Moir Kelly

Donna Hayward

Peggy Lipton

Norma Jennings

David Lynch

Gordon Cole

James Marshall

James Hurley

Jürgen Prochnow

Woodman

Harry Dean Stanton

Carl Rodd

Kiefer Sutherland

Sam Stanley

Lenny Von Dohlen

Harold Smith

Grace Zabriskie

Sarah Palmer

Kyle MacLachlan

Special Agent

Dale Cooper

Frances Bay

Mrs Tremond

Catherine E. Coulson

Log Lady

Michael J. Anderson

Man from Another

Place

Frank Silva

◀ Leland/Bob and, along with Ronette, dragged to a disused railroad car, where she is further abused and killed. After death, Laura is transported to the Lodge, where she has a vision of an angel, and smiles.

Given that *Twin Peaks*, the television series, represents a bizarre fusion of the values of prime-time soap-mystery with the sado-delirium of David Lynch's evolving vision, it is at once surprising and horrifyingly inevitable that this feature spin-off should pare away all the elements that made the show bearable and cultishly appealing, coming up with what may well be the director's cruellest film since *Eraserhead*. Refusing to satisfy the series' fans' wish to know what happens next by not picking up from the show's cliff-hanger ending – which is referred to obliquely by the momentary appearance of the inexplicable Annie, who refers to a future when Bob has (temporarily?) prevailed over Agent Cooper – the film instead returns to the backstory of Laura Palmer.

Furthermore, in pruning the catch-phrases, comic sub-plots, big-business soap, eccentric flourishes, playful eroticism, and detective story elements, not to mention many popular characters/actors, from the original series, the film deliberately chooses to alienate a large segment of the audience who found the show likeable – as witness the extremely hostile reaction to its screening at Cannes – and to concentrate on a genuinely disturbing, genuinely frightening descent into Hell. Indeed, Lynch opens with a prologue designed to disorient the viewer familiar with the show by dramatising the Teresa Banks case as a capsule re-run (pre-run?) of the whole plot – another evocative theme tune, another dead girl, another FBI agent, another sheriff, another diner, another forensics man, another clutch of eccentrics.

The difference is that this presents a joyless, glum and senile community bereft of the pretty girls, natural beauty, ensemble acting camaraderie and skewed charm which make up much of the appeal of *Twin Peaks*. The only familiar element is Lynch himself, cast in the role of the hard-of-hearing Cole, who introduces Agent Desmond to his dancing mime cousin. Her peculiar act delivers a complex message which Desmond then decodes for his sidekick, Kiefer Sutherland, in a parody both of the process of intuitive deduction from minimal clues upon which Cooper's investigations depend, and of the way Lynch's own works tend to be combed for multi-level symbols and signifiers that, in the end, may be no more than atmospheric set-dressing, multiple McGuffins.

Although the first half of the series was mainly concerned with raking over the ashes of the past shown here, *Twin Peaks*, the television show, abjured almost completely the use of flashbacks, preferring to present possible versions of the past as various characters were drawn down the same path

as Laura Palmer. The most powerful moment, in a Lynch-directed episode, was Leland/Bob's murder of Laura's lookalike cousin, named Madeleine Ferguson in a nod/reference/homage to *Vertigo*, and also played by Sheryl Lee. This renders redundant in narrative terms anything in the current film, an aspect made even more bizarre by the inevitable process of time, whereby all the actors who return from the show are now older, even though the film takes place before everything we have seen. The only replacement cast member – Moira Kelly taking over from Lara Flynn Boyle – is actually more convincing as a younger version of her character than any of the others, who are taking up not from where they left off but from a point prior to where they started in the first place.

The conventional way of providing a film to cap the cancelled series would have been to take up all the unresolved plot-lines and tie them in a neat knot, preferably allowing Cooper a victory over Bob and revealing which characters survived or were killed in the explosion that untidily scrambled a whole bunch of storylines in the final episode. This prequel, however, is actually more in line with the general drive of *Twin Peaks* which, with all its time-hopping, was as concerned with delving into the hidden past as progressing into the narrative future.

After the prologue, there is a flurry of re-establishing touches – micro-cameos from series regulars like Mädchen Amick and Eric DaRe, capsule scenes to recreate plot elements – before the film plunges into Laura Palmer's degradation. In the monster father figure of Leland/Bob, Lynch has a bogeyman who puts Craven's Freddie Krueger to shame by bringing into the open the incest, abuse and brutality which the *Elm Street* movies conceal behind MTV surrealism and flip wisecracks. When Donna is slipped a hallucinogen at the Renault roadhouse, the images (and, as usual with Lynch, the multi-layered and terrifying soundtrack) couldn't be any more disturbing.

The film's many moments of horror – an excursion into a drab room in a picture given Laura by a spectral old woman and which turns out to be one of the entrances to the Lodge; Laura's hysterical and numbed laughter as Bobby is shocked by the murder he has committed; the alternations of the glowering Leland with the insanely evil Bob – demonstrate just how tidy, conventional and domesticated the generic horror movie of the 80s and 90s has become. The angel that finally adds a touch of hope in Laura's after-life, and which could have strayed in from Lynch's *Wild at Heart* where she was played by Sheryl Lee, is the single up-beat element in a movie relentlessly concerned with nightmare. While not exactly comfortable or pleasurable viewing, *Fire Walk with Me* succeeds in showing the sour heart that has always lurked beneath the onion leaves of the show.

Kim Newman

Unlawful Entry

USA 1992

Director: Jonathan Kaplan

Certificate

18

Distributor

20th Century Fox
Production Company
Largo Entertainment
In association with
JVC Entertainment

Producer

Charles Gordon

Line Producer

Gene Levy

Associate Producer

Sulla Hamer

Production Co-ordinator

Valerie Mickaelian

Unit Production Manager

Vince Heilesen

Location Manager

Ira Rosenstein

Casting

Jackie Burch

Extras:

Central Casting

Assistant Directors

D. Scott Easton

Mark Cotone

Laura Nisbet

Screenplay

Lewis Colick

Story

George D. Putnam

John Katchmer

Lewis Colick

Director of Photography

Jamie Anderson

Colour

DeLuxe

Camera Operator

Todd Henry

Editor

Curtiss Clayton

Production Designer

Lawrence G. Paull

Visual Consultant

Alan Hoffman

Art Director

Bruce Crone

Art Department

Co-ordinator

Ashley Burnham

Set Design

Dawn Snyder

Set Decorator

Rick Simpson

Special Effects

Co-ordinator

Chuck Dolan

Special Effects

John Hagy

Music

James Horner

Music Editor

Jim Henrikson

Songs

"Pa la ocha tambo",

"Just a Little Dream" by

and performed by Eddie

Palmieri; "National

Crime Awareness Week"

by Ron Mael, Russell

Mael, performed by

Sparks; "Everybody's

Free to Feel Good" by

Nigel Swanson, Tim

Cox, performed by

Rozalla; "Don't Go to

Strangers" by and

performed by J.J. Cale

Costume Design

April Ferry

Costume Supervisor

Paul Lopez

Set Costumers

Alexandria Forster

Joe Markham

Make-up Artists

Hallie D'Amore

Dennis Liddiard

Kim Felix

Kathy Kelly

Titles/Opticals

Cinema Research

Corporation

Sound Design/

Supervising Sound Editor

Sandy Berman

Sound Editors

John Benson

Susan Dudeck

Bruce Lacey

George Simpson

Marvin Walowitz

Karen Wilson

Supervising ADR Editor

Lauren Palmer

ADR Editors

George Anderson

Jerelyn J. Harding

Supervising Foley Editor

C. Christopher Flick

Foley Editor

Phillip Linson

Sound Recordist

Glenn Anderson

ADR Recordist

Charleen Richards

Foley Recordist

Jim Ashwill

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists

Kevin O'Connell

Gregg Landaker

Steve Maslow

Foley Artists

Dan O'Connell

Alicia Stevenson

Technical Advisers

Mike Grasso

Craig Mizutari

Kelley Leftwich

Police Co-ordinator

Ron Hughes

Production Assistants

D. Robin Allen

Jack Angelo

Sam Green

Stephen Hollocker

Donny Kelly

Marc Lignier

Post-production:

Bill Draper

Christopher Coombs

Stunt Co-ordinator

Bob Minor

Stunts

Eddie Braun

Kathryn Brock

John Casino

Phil Chong

Roydon Clark

Eugene Collier

Jay De Pland

Nick Dimitri

Greg Elam

Gary Epper

George Fisher

Larry Holt

Jerry Hooper

Terry Jackson

Julius LeFlore

Denver Mattson

D'Wayne McGee

Rita Minor

John Moio

Conrad Palmisano

Wally Rose

Bill Upton

Victoria Van Der Kloot

Jack Verbois

Dick Warlock

George Wilbur

Stand-ins

Rob Garrett

Calvin Vaughn

Sonja Roberts

Billy Wallace

Animal Trainer

Hubert Wells

Helicopter Pilot

Bobby Zajonc

Cast

Kurt Russell

Michael Carr

Ray Liotta

Officer Pete Davis

Madeleine Stowe

Karen Carr

Roger E. Mosley

Officer Roy Cole

Ken Lerner

Roger Graham

Deborah Offner

Penny

Carmen Argenziano

Jerome Lurie

Al Romano

Captain Hayes

Johnny Ray McGhee

Ernie Pike

Dino Anello

Leon

Sonny Davis

Neighbour Jack

Harry Northup

Sergeant McMurty

Sherri Rose

Girl in Jeep

Alicia Ramirez

Taco Stand Worker

Ruby Salazar

Rosa

Spider Madison

Goatee

Myim Rose

Layla

T.J. McInturf

Layla's Child

Tony Longo

Big Anglo

Oscar Abadia

Radio Announcer

Lynn Eastman

Candace Lurie

David Taylor Moran

Leslie James

Party Guests

Chris Coombs

Valet

Matthew Levy

Dorian Daneau

Marisa Durboraw

Royce Minor

Classroom Children

Judy Hoy

Waitress

Dick Miller

Impound Clerk

Bob Minor

Detective Murray

Curt Boulware

Tall Detective

Craig Mizutari

Narcotics Detective

Phil Bollen

Ed DeFusco

Plainclothes Cops

Djimon

Jeffrey Beale

Prisoners on Bench

Richard Narita

Detective Nobu

Eduardo Migre

Transfer Guard

Peter Dupont

Deputy

Nora Hefflin

Lawyer

Charles David Richards

Bariff

Chuck Bennett

Judge Darabont

Robert M. Steinberg

Deputy D.A.

Victor Brandt

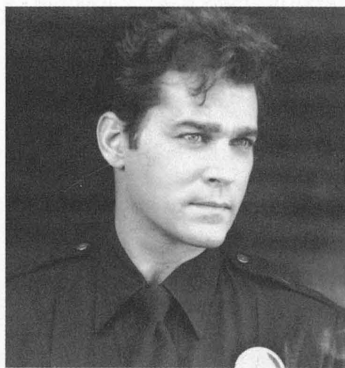
Michael and Karen Carr have moved into a smart new house in the Los Angeles suburbs. One evening, as Michael works at his desk and Karen watches TV, they hear noises downstairs. A burglar has broken into the house through the skylight, and threatens Karen by putting a knife to her throat. After he escapes, the couple call the police, and LA policeman Pete Davis and his partner Roy Cole turn up on their doorstep. Davis is caring and sympathetic, and the couple warm to him. They follow his advice about installing an elaborate burglar alarm, and soon he and the Carrs become the best of friends.

One night, Davis invites Michael to 'ride along' with the police, and at the end of the evening, promises Michael a treat. He takes him downtown to where the Carrs' burglar is known to be hiding out. Davis invites Michael to revenge himself on his wife's attacker, and when Michael refuses, Davis brutally beats the burglar. Disgusted, Michael determines to have nothing further to do with the policeman. Karen thinks that her husband is overreacting, and apologises to Davis on his behalf.

Subsequently, as Michael is about to clinch a property deal on a night-club, Davis turns up at the opening-night party, but Michael makes him leave. The vengeful Davis then sets about wooing Karen away from Michael, and making the latter's life a misery. Michael's credit cards are mysteriously cancelled; his car is clamped; the house alarm goes off and the police bust in. In the end, Michael swallows his pride and tries to buy Davis off. Davis refuses, and Michael, unable to make an official complaint because he has no evidence, asks Davis' partner Roy Cole for help.

Cole warns Davis to leave the Carrs alone, but Davis responds by shooting his old friend during a routine stake-out. A stash of cocaine is found in Michael's bedroom and he is arrested. While his lawyer struggles to raise bail, Davis enters the Carrs' home. Playing for time, Karen pretends to welcome his advances, but when she reaches for a gun, Davis loses his temper and attempts to rape her. Michael has meanwhile secured his release, and races home where he finally kills Davis in a protracted struggle.

Unlawful Entry is one in a series of recent films which show middle-class America under siege, grimacing its way into the 1990s. The bullish confidence of the Reagan years has dissipated: white-collar unemployment, lax gun laws and the unholy trinity of homicide, drugs and disease have come to haunt the suburbs. Nemesis, whether in the form of collapsing Savings and Loan banks, or as embodied by characters like Robert De Niro's Max Cady in *Cape Fear*, is never far away. Here the canker emerges from within; it is not the encroaching 'underclass' who threaten the all-American homestead. Appropriately enough for a film set in Los Angeles in the year of the



Consummate hunchback: Ray Liotta

Rodney King trial and the subsequent riots, it is the friendly neighbourhood policeman who becomes the agent of destruction.

Played by Ray Liotta, the bent cop undergoes an astonishing transformation, as if turning from Dixon of Dock Green into Norman Bates before our very eyes. Whereas De Niro's Cady was an outside creature from the start, tattooed and malevolent, Liotta's version of the exterminating angel, Officer Davis, begins in low key and only reaches full-throated psychopathy in the final reel. Tormenting yuppies is a task Liotta performed admirably for Jonathan Demme in *Something Wild*. The main difference here is that he is supposed to be on the right side of the tracks, and at least at first he is as much hero as villain. Counterpointing Liotta's moody pyrotechnics, Kurt Russell, a former Disney child star, offers a well-oiled rendering of the clean-living, wholesome, golf-playing American.

In the course of the film, all the cherished toys of this 80s yuppie turn against him: his mobile phone proves an irritant, his credit cards bounce, his car is clamped, his golf clubs make awful weapons (he needs a gun, not a putter) and, worst of all, the homestead is impossible to defend. Kaplan, impeccably even-handed, takes satirical swipes at the financially overextended, sinking middle-classes, mocking their materialism and their fear of 'downtown', the big bad beyond which threatens house prices. The film's main achievement is to fit its trenchant social critique into conventional thriller form. In this sense, it is arguably more successful than Kaplan's most celebrated previous picture, *The Accused*, which tried to combine courtroom drama with an examination of attitudes towards rape.

Action ranges across the great divide, from the bleak urban wasteland the police patrol to the antiseptic suburbs. The film catches the fear and paranoia of the couple 'home alone'; whenever danger threatens, the cat contrives to break a piece of crockery. But in the end, it is Liotta's film: he is a consummate Richard hunchback of a villain. Like the screen gangsters critic Robert Warshaw once wrote about, his corrupt policeman occupies the dark, subterranean city of the imagination. He is what we want to be and "what we are afraid we may become".

Geoffrey Macnab

TV FILM

Black and Blue

United Kingdom 1992

Director: David Hayman

Distributor

BBC TV
Production Company
BBC Films

For Screen One

Executive Producer

Richard Broke

Producer

Ruth Caleb

G. F. Newman

Associate Producer

Simon Mills

Location Manager

Deborah Saban

Casting

Gail Stevens

Emma Style

Assistant Directors

Alan J. Wands

Andy Jackson

Clare Nicholson

Screenplay

G. F. Newman

Director of Photography

John Daly

In colour

Editor

Sue Wyatt

Production Designer

Paul Haines

Special Effects

Stuart Brisden

Music

Bob Last

Costume Design

Dinah Collin

Make-up Design

Di Roberts

Title Sequence

Linda Sherwood-Page

Sound Editors

Malcolm McKenna

Janet Lawson

Sound Recordist

Clive Derbyshire

Sound Re-recordists

Aad Wirtz

Adrian Rhodes

Stunt Arranger

Peter Brayham

Cast

Christopher John Hall

Maurice Knight

Linus Roache

DS Brian Tait

Martin Shaw

Chief Superintendent

Mike Barclay

Iain Glen

Commander Powell

Ray Winstone

Charlie Brett-Smith

Don Henderson

Daddy Brett-Smith

Rowena King

Roberta Ford

Fraser James

Benny Soares

Clive Wedderburn

Torrington Westcott

Roger Sewell

Donny Jessop

David Thewlis

Crematorium

Attendant

Madhav Sharma

Magistrate

David Morrissey

DC Norman Mills

Patrice Naiambana

DCI Booker

Terry Sue Patt

Car Breaker

Colin McFarlane

Jesse Jarman

Sidney Cole

Del Lindo

Andrew Wilde

Desk Sergeant

Bill Leadbitter

DC Jeff Stickly

James Smith

Superintendent

Neville Robinson

Bobby Sterling

Cynthia Powell

Mrs Sterling

Sunshine

Rev Morton

Nicholas Monu

Policeman (Trevor)

Charlie Hawkins

Policeman in Cell

Jeillo Edwards

Mrs Jessop

Sheila Whitfield

Jackie Jessop

Eddie Nestor

Man with Dog

David Keys

Second Hand Dealer

Mark Ramsay-Jones

Trombone Kid

Myron McKay

Medal Kid

Clarence Venson

Benny's Minder

Dora Dixon-Fyle

Mrs Westcott

Boris Isarov

Neighbour

Jayne Mackenzie

TV Reporter

Harban Singh

Asian Man

Ajeeth Singh

Asian Woman

7,970 feet

(at 25 fps) 85 minutes

Tensions are running high between the police force and the local black community on the Green-hill Estate in London. On the same night as the police mount a drug swoop, an outspoken black councillor, Jesse Jarman, is murdered. One of his associates, Del Lindo, is identified by a white bigot, Charlie Brett-Smith, but the police investigation gets nowhere, and Inspector Barclay requests the transfer of a black policeman to work undercover. The computer turns up Maurice Knight, an inexperienced PC from Devon. No sooner has he been dropped off at the estate than Knight is arrested by racist plain clothes detectives Mills and Stickly, who beat him and plant drugs in his bags.

Knight's sole police contact, Tait, sees that the case against him is dropped, and advises him to deal the dope in order to make contact with the elusive Del Lindo. Knight becomes friendly with teenager Torrington Westcott, and gives him some boxing pointers at the community youth club run by Roberta Ford. He also ingratiates himself with a dealer, Benny Soares, by saving him from muggers. Brett-Smith leads an attack on Knight, but the tables are turned and he lets slip that he was told to identify Del Lindo. Knight accompanies Benny to collect drugs from his suppliers: Mills and Stickly. They do not recognise the undercover cop, but Tait, who is with them, tries to set Knight up on possession charges.

Knight escapes, and takes shelter with Roberta. The next day, he catches up with Brett-Smith who confesses that it was Tait who told him to identify Del Lindo. Knight is cold-shouldered by his friends at the club; his cover is blown. He comes across Torrington breaking into a car and threatens to charge him. Instead he learns that a local boy, Donny Jessop, killed Jarman. Donny admits complicity and Knight informs Barclay. Before he leaves, Roberta takes Knight to see Del Lindo. He reports that he saw Tait and Mills cremate a dope dealer on the night of Jarman's murder and that Jarman had recorded incriminating evidence against the force on cassettes. ►



Bruising for the Bill: Rowena King, Christopher John Hall, Linus Roache

◀ The police search for the tapes at Donny's home, but Knight realises that Torrington must have them. On the streets, a riot is brewing over the arrest of Donny and another youth. Tait recovers the tapes from Torrington but is caught in the midst of the riot. Knight survives an attempt on his life at the crematorium and saves Tait from the rioters, but when he learns that the tapes went up in flames with Tait's car, he beats his superior in front of his colleagues. Knight makes a report to the Police Complaints Commission and is awarded the Queen's Police Medal, but returns to Roberta's community centre to give Torrington a few more tips in the ring.

● A thriller with an axe to grind, *Black and Blue* turns the conventions of the television *policier* inside out – a rogue episode of *The Bill* infiltrated by subversives. In fact, director David Hayman has turned out eight episodes of *The Bill*, and this terse, bruising Screen One film reiterates the tight-lipped, hard-nosed image that is the face of modern law enforcement on the small screen. It has none of the subjective tropes which marked *Silent Screams*, Hayman's 1989 debut feature. With its roster of cameo stars, short-hand visual style and unreasonably high incidence of violence, it is clear that *Black and Blue* is aimed at a popular audience primed for just such a mainstream cop show.

It is unlikely, though, that many will be prepared for the picture of London's Metropolitan detectives presented by G. F. Newman's script, even in the wake of so many well-publicised real-life miscarriages of justice: they are racist, vicious bigots to a man, who routinely plant evidence, beat up 'suspects', intimidate witnesses, ride roughshod over community relations and commit murder. Against this stands PC Knight, the 'fish-out-of-water' undercover cop from Devon – though his true roots belong in myth not Plymouth. An innocent abroad who arrives 'inconspicuously' with a trombone under his arm, he certainly meets Raymond Chandler's requirements for a "man who is not himself mean".

The message is blunt: the police are in urgent need of radical reform. Newman has no truck with notions of 'balance' and offers up no white prisoner of conscience. Such single-mindedness gives the film its impact, but also makes for some simplistic (black and white) oppositions; it may be called 'blunt' in a second sense of 'without an edge'. Myth and agit-prop are uneasy bedfellows. Too many conflicts are resolved by Knight's strong left hook and the breathless dénouement in particular is plotted with no great finesse. Newman's 1978 series *Law and Order* provoked questions in the House. It will be interesting to see if this hit-and-run thriller can make the charges stick, but clearly Newman will not be satisfied until the public and the media have expressed their verdict.

Tom Charity

TV FILM

Disaster at Valdez

United Kingdom/USA 1992

Director: Paul Seed

Distributor

BBC TV

Production Companies

BBC Films (London)/
HBO (New York)
In association with ZDF
Developed in
association with The
Entertainment Group/
Turtleback Productions

Executive Producers

Richard Broke

Leslie Woodhead

HBO:

Colin Callendar

Executive

HBO Showcase:

Brian Sibrell

Producers

David M. Thompson

John Smithson

Co-producers

Frank Doelger

Howard Melzer

Associate Producer

Joanna Gueritz

Production Co-ordinator

Sandra Palmer

Production Manager

Bob Gray

Unit Manager

Tracey Jeffrey

Casting

Mary Colquhoun

Vancouver:

Stuart Atkins

Assistant Directors

Lee Knippenberg

Morgan Beggs

Shirley Parsons

Screenplay

Michael Baker

Based on research

by Michael Baker,

Bob Duffield

Director of Photography

Ian Punter

In colour

Camera Operators

Peter Woeste

John Holbrook

Steadicam Operator

Bob Crone

Graphic Design

Linda Sherwood-Page

Editor

Dave King

Production Designer

Graeme Murray

Art Director

Gary Allen

Set Decorator

Michael O'Connor

Music

David Ferguson

Costume Design

Larry Wells

Make-up Artist

Connie Parker

Sound Editors

Cynthia Bowles

Joe Walker

Sound Recordists

Keith Marriner

Ralph Parker

Marine Co-ordinator

John N. Smith

Aerial Co-ordinator

Steve Wright

Cast

John Heard

Dan Lawn

Christopher Lloyd

Frank Iarossi

Rip Torn

Admiral Paul Yost

Don S. Davis

Bill Stevens

Bob Gunton

Larry Dietrick

Mark Metcalf

Dennis Kelso

Bruce Gray

Governor Steve Cowper

Wally Dalton

Senator

Paul Guilfoyle

Commander Steve

McCall

Michael Murphy

Bill Reilly

Gary Reineke

Rear Admiral Nelson

Jackson Davies

Captain Joseph

Hazelwood

Kenneth Welsh

Sam Skinner

David Morse

Rick Steiner

Timothy Webber

Jack Lamb

Tamsin Kelsey

Dr Rikki Ott

Ron Frazier

Don Cornett

Remak Ramsay

Craig Rassinier

Jo-Anne Bates

Michelle Brown

Wally Marsh

John Janssen

Peg Christopherson

A. B. Maureen Jones

Nathan Vanering

Helmman Kagan

Anthony Uic

First Mate Kunkel

Dwight McFee

Crewman

Michael Rogers

David Grimes

Danny Virtue

Baker

Meredith Woodward

Woman Reporter

Pamela Martin

Kevin Hayes

TV Reporters

Kathy Goertzen

Barry Judge

Gary Justice

TV Newscasters

Sam Shields

Sonya Bakker

Jeff Rechner

Leigh Morrow

Journalists

Peter Anderson

Karen Austin

Tom Heaton

Hilary Strang

Bill Croft

Lloyd Berry

Adrian Dorval

Questioners

8,400 feet

(at 25 fps) 90 minutes



What kind of a world: Christopher Lloyd, John Heard

slowly and inadequately – to the fury of Dan Lawn, District Supervisor of the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC).

Frank Iarossi, President of Exxon Shipping, flies from Houston to Valdez. Horrified by the magnitude of the disaster – already 8 million gallons have spilled out – he finds his attempts to take action blocked by the conflicting jealousies and fears of the various parties involved: Alyeska, the Coastguard Service, the State of Alaska, ADEC and his own bosses back at Exxon HQ. Lawn, too, is frustrated by his own superiors in ADEC, who regard him as dangerously impulsive.

The oil slick from the Exxon Valdez spreads rapidly, threatening the islands and shores of the sound. Iarossi seeks authorisation to use dispersants, but is opposed by local fishermen fearing the chemicals will damage marine life. Agreement is eventually reached too late to be effective. A delegation sent by President Bush arrives from Washington, but is mainly concerned to avoid the federal government getting involved. Meanwhile, Captain Hazelwood, suspected of being drunk when the accident happened, is removed from the tanker.

The slick comes ashore over a wide area: damage to wildlife and the environment is catastrophic. The fishermen, with Lawn's help, mount a desperate attempt to protect the salmon hatcheries. Iarossi admits defeat while Lawn, furious at official apathy, gives a clandestine interview to a journalist. End titles reveal that Iarossi resigned, Lawn was shifted from his job, and the damage to Prince William Sound will last into the next century.

● "Who the hell is running this show?" demands Frank Iarossi, as the horrendous chaos of the situation at Valdez is borne in on him. The answer, of course, is nobody if they can possibly help it, since anyone rash enough to take charge will get saddled with the blame not only for their own mistakes but for everybody else's as well. So the buck is tossed nimbly from hand to hand while the oil spreads, the sea darkens, and birds and animals suffocate slowly in noxious black gunge.

The strength of *Disaster at Valdez* is the lucidity with which it maps this tangle of political in-fighting, territorial rivalries and downright incompetence. Repeatedly, the film cuts from shots of despoiled arctic solitudes to the crowded hubbub of press conferences, where official after official lays down a slick – no less deadly than the oil itself – of self-exculpatory verbiage.

At \$4m, *Disaster at Valdez* is the BBC's most expensive film to date, and looks like it. Too much so, sometimes: few transitions from venue to venue are complete without actors shown scrambling in and out of boats, helicopters or executive jets. Far more effective are simpler shots: the surging black cauldron of the oil leak welling up to the surface – or, in a graphic countdown to disaster, the tanker's depth sounder flicking unnoticed from 200 fathoms down to twenty-and-falling.

The film's chief weakness, paradoxically, stems from the same source as its strength: its principled fidelity to actual events. In dramatic terms, the story peaks early, after which tension ebbs steadily away, affording no final catharsis. Hollywood, no doubt, would have engineered some sort of last-reel shoot-out. Michael Baker and Paul Seed settle for a mini-climax with Dan Lawn's speech to an anonymous journalist: "What kind of a world is it when the stock market and the bottom line is more important than the land and the sea?" But it feels tacked on, a clumsy spelling-out of what has already been made vividly clear.

In any case, nothing shot by the film-makers, for all their skill, can compete with the seamlessly integrated newsreel footage of the oil's ultimate victims: birds and animals struggling in agony, dying and dead, heaped in their thousands in plastic bags and shovelled into furnaces. Over these desolate images, a bland political voice (George Bush presumably, though for some odd reason uncredited) speaks of "no lasting environmental damage" and warns of the danger of taking "irresponsible action to guard against an incident of this nature". Intended or not, the final message of *Disaster at Valdez* isn't indignation, but despair.

Philip Kemp

Short films

The Brooch Pin and the Sinful Clasp

United Kingdom 1989

Director: Joanna Woodward

Distributor BFI/Connoisseur Video
Production Company National Film and Television School
Production Manager Zoe Brown
Screenplay Joanna Woodward
Camera Kate Polack
In colour
Animation Joanna Woodward
Editor Ewajlind
Set Design Guy Forrester

Mouldmakers Neil Cummings
Jonathan Saville
Music David Humpage
Costume Design Samantha Jones
Extras Costumes Andrea Grant
Sound David Humpage

Cast
Rose English
Giantess
Ian Cameron
Customer

1,736 feet
19 minutes

In a windswept city, a man sees a mechanical ballerina dancing on top of a tower block and, lovestruck, resolves to climb up to her. On the way up, he passes apartments in which he glimpses the inhabitants praying, fighting, telephoning; in one, a woman irons the moon into a shirt and dances with it before changing into a mouse; in another, a manic disco is taking place. The man picks a rose from a window-box display but is washed down by the woman watering it. A Giantess loses one of her eyelashes which flutters down and becomes the hair of a woman leaning out of a window. As the man nears the top of the building, the Giantess plucks him off; the skyscraper is her leg, the ballerina her brooch pin. She undresses him and bakes him in a pie, while old men sit hunched silently at bar tables. On the wall, the street scenes which opened the film are being projected. A man pays for the pie with a banknote on which he places a paper heart. The heart melts into the note leaving a red stain. He also leaves the Giantess a rose which she places in a vase of faded roses on her counter. The ballerina briefly appears again as the roses miraculously regain their freshness.

The preciousness of the love quest in Joanna Woodward's short, award-winning film is offset by the protean roughness of the animation itself. At moments *The Brooch Pin* brushes the domain of the nursery-tale – Rapunzel braids hang out of a window, faces cooing with bemusement pop out of others, and butterflies materialise in the climber's stomach. But what motivates the film is the violence of its metamorphosis, the energy with which objects shift size, shape, texture and relation to each other.

The lover's ascent towards his obscurely rotating object of desire is paralleled by a similar ascent in the material – from two-dimensional cut out, through painted material imbued with swirling liquid life, to even more tactile plasticine, and finally into live action in the Giantess' pie shop where the Lilliputian lover undergoes his

final incarnation as a human. David Humpage's soundtrack brilliantly reinforces this volatility of form, at times a wheeze of decrepit violin, at others a febrile cacophony suited both to the hero's turbulent heart and to the urban Babel he scales.

Taken by itself, the film's first part might be seen as a slender, self-consciously virtuoso exercise in the material factor in animation, with its play between two- and three-dimensional figures, its manipulation of solids and surfaces, its incorporation of ragged newsprint. The shift into live action makes it rather more enigmatic and disturbing as the pantomime Giantess, her skirts spread as a stage curtain, opens up a theatre of desire.

Stripped, baked and apparently served to himself, the homonculus has achieved human form – albeit as a wizened, childlike, asexual creature – but not his dream. The Giantess on top of the beanstalk has replaced the dainty doll as his object of desire – an inaccessible Amazon Queen, and fearsome mother-figure, who challenges him with a quizzing, equivocally sexual look. In many respects the film is rather more eloquent about male anxieties than about female ones. Coming from a female director, in a video package entitled *Wayward Girls and Wicked Women*, it's remarkable how much *The Brooch Pin* lends itself to being read as a male nightmare, but that is certainly where the resonances lie.

Jonathan Romney

Feet of Song

United Kingdom 1988

Director: Erica Russell

Distributor BFI/Connoisseur Video
Production Company Channel Four Television
Producer Lee Stork
Camera Begonia Tamarit
Ted Gerald
In colour
Designer/Animator Erica Russell

Additional Animation Adam Parker-Rhodes
Liz Spencer
Michelle Salamon
Chris Jones
Editor Picturehead Productions
Music Charlie Hart
Music Performed by Gasper Lawal
Alfred Bannerman

204 feet
6 minutes
(16mm)

Feet of Song comprises choreographed, animated dance sequences featuring stylised human figures interspersed with abstract forms. The figures leap and stamp to a musical score set to guitar and talking drum. The bursts of abstraction are often no more than one or two sweeping brushstrokes, picking out a momentary refrain amid the insistent drumbeat. Elsewhere, a flurry of guitar heralds a host of multiplying dance forms. The orange, ochre and black shapes contrast with bold sweeps and stripes of primary colour, recalling the striations on the African masks from which the film takes its inspiration.

Feet of Song is one of the most joyful musical animations since Len Lye's abstractions made for the GPO Film Unit in the 30s, particularly *Rain-*

bow Dance and *Colour Box*. Russell, like Lye, was a sculptor, whose interest in kinetics led her to animation and the pure relationship between colour, form, movement and musical composition. Her inspiration comes from non-European cultures where these qualities are already blended directly into visual forms. These are familiar concerns of modernist art and, not surprisingly, Russell's influences include Barbara Hepworth and the American painter, Morris Louis, as well as Lye.

Feet of Song conveys the sensual pleasures, the broad, flat, gestural sweeps of a colour-field painting with the extra dimensions of sound and movement. Russell's other formative influence comes from her years at Cucumber Studios in the late 70s where Annabel Jankel and Rocky Morton pioneered the animated pop video, creating classics of the genre for Elvis Costello and Tom Tom Club.

Russell was born in South Africa and *Feet of Song* represents her return to what was censored in her upbringing. She researched extensively for her film in music, dance, masks, sculpture and body painting. *Feet of Song* records both anthropological information about African mask dances and her personal experience of African dance classes. Russell also worked closely with composer Charlie Hart to achieve the exact synchronisation of music and movement which gives *Feet of Song* such a perfect rhythm.

This kinaesthetic approach is well known to modernist sculptors; the artist's body is the measure and basis for the articulation of even abstract forms, and, in theory, this physical relationship is also felt by the spectator. In animation, too, the animator will often act out a character's movements in order to analyse them. *Feet of Song* celebrates the sensuality of movement, immersed in the pleasures of music and colour. Like female sexuality, it is felt with the whole body, which gives the film an undeniably erotic impact.

Irene Kotlarz

The Stain

United Kingdom 1991

Directors: Marjut Rimmine, Christine Roche

Distributor BFI/Connoisseur Video
Production Company Smoothcloud
For Channel Four Television
Producer Orly Yadin
Screenplay Harriett Gilbert
Rostrum Camera Heather Reader
Camera Cathy Greenhalgh
In colour
Animation Marjut Rimmine, Christine Roche
Additional Animation Jeff Goldner
Heini Kauppinen

Checking Debra Thaine
Painting Sarah Strick
Sam Padgett
Editor Picturehead Productions
Music Dick Heckstall-Smith
Dave Moore
Robert Schumann
Guisepppe Verdi
Research Consultant Julia Vellacott
Narration Chrissie Roberts

417 feet
12 minutes
(16mm)

The opening shot of a newspaper clipping reports on the double suicide of twin brothers following a violent family feud about a grave

stain on the tablecloth. A woman's voice describes and comments on the story that unfolds. In the first part, rendered in drawn images, a couple play a game in their isolated seaside home, a sexual version of hide-and-seek. A girl, and then twin boys, are born, and the games continue, with the sons chasing the daughter. Eventually another child is born, by implication the sister's, and the parents apparently commit suicide. The baby takes a fall down the stairs which leaves her paralysed for life.

The second part is animated mainly with three-dimensional figures and depicts the escalating tensions between the remaining family members. The youngest child, petulant and messy, retreats into a fantasy world (expressed as drawn animation), while the older sister obsessively cleans the house. The twins work in the city and indulge their penchant for transvestism on the sly. After an argument at the dinner table, it is revealed that not only did the older sister push the baby down the stairs but that one of the brothers is the father. The brothers shoot themselves and later the younger sister throws herself out of the window.

When fairy tales explore the horrors of the domestic closet, it is often bulging with evil mothers, traitorous fathers and twisted siblings. Once upon a time, magical settings and props served to distance the stories from their basis in everyday life, thus fictionalising their content and allaying the threat to the reader. Later versions, in which step-parents and step-siblings were scapegoated, establish a similar fictional distance. By contrast, *The Stain* is located inside the nuclear family, the primal scene of the fairy story, or as the intertitle taken from Jean Genet puts it, "probably the most criminal cell". Here the happy ending is as much a fantasy as the crippled 'baby's' dream of roller-skating.

Each family member is both a victim and a villain, a keeper and a betrayer of the sexually deviant secrets and incestuous games, imprisoned in the happy-family myth which the voice-over mockingly parodies. The disjunction between the imaginary and the real conditions in which they live is underscored by the interplay between drawn and 3D animation. For example, the sister's obsessive cleaning, rendered in fluid drawings, is intercut (and undercut) with shots of squalor in a live-action world.

In *The Stain*, the past haunts the present in a tight economy of flashbacks and recurrent images. As in the best short films nothing is wasted and everything interlocks until the whole edifice comes tumbling down. Like a Greek tragedy, the outcome is already foretold yet the dénouement is no less shocking when it comes. The film as a whole has a visceral impact like a good production of *Oedipus Rex*, which was, after all, the original family drama.

Lesley Felpern Sharman

VIDEO

Trevor Johnston reviews this month's rental/rental premiere releases and William Green new retail/retail premiere videos

★ Highlights

Reviews in *Monthly Film Bulletin* (MFB) and *Sight and Sound* are cited in parentheses

Rental

Basic Instinct

Guild 8675

USA 1992

Certificate 18 Director Paul Verhoeven
Controversial but dissatisfying thriller. A murder investigation sees an unstable detective (Michael Douglas) falling under the spell of his prime suspect (Sharon Stone). (S&S May 1992)

Cape Fear

CIC Video VHA 1557

USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director Martin Scorsese
★ Scorsese's updating of J. Lee Thompson's thriller opts for bravura overstatement and sexual unease. A lawyer and his family find themselves menaced by a psychotic ex-convict (Robert De Niro). (S&S March 1992)

The Dark Wind

Guild 8671

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Errol Morris
A tentative, sluggish adaptation of Tony Hillerman's novel about an Native American policeman who uses professional skills and native nous in a complex drugs case. (S&S June 1992)

The Doctor

Buena Vista D312572

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Randa Haines
Aloof surgeon William Hurt changes his attitude after becoming a patient in his own hospital. Patchy medical drama saved by Hurt's performance and some tart black humour. (S&S April 1992)

Final Analysis

Warner PEV 12243

USA 1992

Certificate 15 Director Phil Joanou

San Francisco shrink Richard Gere becomes entangled with two troubled sisters (Kim Basinger and Uma Thurman). A clichéd Hitchcock-style thriller. (S&S June 1992)

Hook

Columbia TriStar CVR 13187

USA 1991

Certificate U Director Steven Spielberg
Resistibly synthetic fantasy inspired by *Peter Pan*. High-powered lawyer Robin Williams is whisked to Neverland to recapture his lost innocence and take on Dustin Hoffman's Hook. (S&S April 1992)

Kuffs

EV EVV 1228

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Bruce A. Evans
A free-spirited youngster (Christian Slater) grows up quickly when he takes on a franchise in San Francisco's private police force. Promising source material but formulaic treatment. (S&S June 1992)

Late for Dinner

First Independent VA20168

USA 1991

Certificate PG Director W. D. Richter
Frozen in a cryogenics experiment for thirty years, Brian Wimmer and his brother-in-law (Peter Berg) emerge to face the 90s with predictable confusion. Threadbare time-shifting adventure. (S&S April 1992)

Men of Respect

Columbia TriStar CVR 13222

USA 1990

Certificate 18 Director William Reilly
Violent and occasionally risible transfer of *Macbeth* to today's New York mafiosi. John Turturro is at the centre of the bloodletting. (S&S May 1992)

Ricochet

First Independent VA 20167

USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director Russell Mulcahy
★ Joel Silver production with tongue firmly in cheek. A deranged killer escapes from prison on a mission to kill cop Denzel Washington. (S&S May 1992)



Road to the future: Solveig Dommartin

Until the End of the World (Bis ans Ende der Welt)

EV EVV 1221

Germany/France/Australia 1991

Certificate 15 Director Wim Wenders
★ Global sci-fi road movie. The first half is an extended comedic chase, the second a meditation on the nature of images. The result is misjudged but fascinating. (S&S May 1992)

Rental premiere

After the Glory

Odyssey ODY 326

USA 1992

Certificate PG Director John Gray
Producer Alan Jacobs Screenplay John Gray Lead Actors Brad Johnson, Kathleen Quinlan, Josef Sommer, Tom Sizemore 100 minutes
WWII heroes return to combat political corruption in their home town by campaigning in the local election. Stolid, liberal retreat of themes from *The Best Years of Our Lives*.

Amityville 1992: It's About Time

FoxVideo Movie Premiere 5769

USA 1992

Certificate 18 Director Tony Randel
Producer Christopher Defaria Screenplay Christopher Defaria, Antonio Toro Lead Actors Stephen Macht, Shawn Weatherly, Megan Ward, Damon Martin 95 minutes
A suburban family is terrorised by an antique clock from Hell. Not bad haunted house horror which unleashes the protagonists' dark desires in an inventive fashion.

Basic Deception

New Age/Columbia TriStar CVT 16805

USA 1990

Certificate 15 Director Ivan Passer
Producers Frank Konigsberg, Larry Sanitsky Screenplay Andrew Guerdat Lead Actors Mark Harmon, Mimi Rogers, Paul Gleason, M. Emmet Walsh 88 minutes
★ A hunt for a missing husband leads a detective into his own murky past and a romantic involvement with the woman who hired him. Harmon and Rogers give great performances. (US: *Fourth Story*).

Basket Case 3: The Progeny

Braveworld BRV 10147

USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director Frank Henenlotter Producer Edgar Ievins Screenplay Frank Henenlotter, Robert Martin Lead Actors Kevin Van Hentenryck, Gil Roper, Annie Ross, Tina Louise Hilbert 90 minutes
The 'Times Square Freak Twins' travel through the Deep South with Granny Ruth and her busload of misshapen creatures. Comic-book bad taste crossed with children's TV.

Becoming Colette

Medusa MO 363

USA/Germany 1991

Certificate 18 Director Danny Huston

Producers Heinz Bibo, Peer Oppenheimer *Screenplay* Ruth Graham *Lead Actors* Klaus Maria Brandauer, Mathilda May, Virginia Madsen *90 minutes*
Bland, soft-core bio-pic. Mathilda May's Colette struggles for recognition when her publisher husband (Brandauer) assumes the credit for her work.

Blind Man's Bluff

CIC Video VHB 2631

USA 1991

Certificate 15 *Director* James Quinn *Producer* Tom Rowe *Screenplay* Joel Gross *Lead Actors* Robert Urich, Lisa Eilbacher, Patricia Clarkson, Ken Pogue *86 minutes*
A blind ex-professor is questioned by the police after his neighbour is found murdered. On the run from the assailant, he must prove his innocence. No surprises.

Child's Play 3

CIC Video VHA 1553

USA 1991

Certificate 18 *Director* Jack Bender *Producer* Robert Latham Brown *Screenplay* Don Mancini *Lead Actors* Justin Whalin, Perrey Reeves, Jeremy Sylvers, Andrew Robinson *86 minutes*

Possessed toy doll Chucky is responsible for yet more carnage when he traces his previous owner to a top military academy.

Critters 3

EV EVV 1232

USA 1991

Certificate 15 *Director* Kristine Peterson *Producers* Barry Oppenheimer, Rupert Harvey *Screenplay* David J. Schow *Lead Actors* Aimee Brooks, Leonardo DiCaprio, Don Oppenheimer, Katherine Cortez *81 minutes*

Sundry apartment block denizens battle against cute yet carnivorous aliens in this unnecessary sequel. Don Oppenheimer makes a sympathetic intergalactic pest controller.

Devlin

Columbia TriStar CTV 16894

USA 1992

Certificate 18 *Director* Rick Rosenthal *Producers* Paulo de Oliveira, Craig Roessler *Screenplay* David Taylor, based on the novel by Roderick Thorp *Lead Actors* Bryan Brown, Roma Downey, Lloyd Bridges, Jan Rubes *106 minutes*
A detective suspects that he's being framed for the assassination of a senatorial candidate. Standard big-city corruption tale.

Doing Time on Maple Drive

FoxVideo 5571

USA 1991

Certificate PG *Director* Ken Olin *Producer* Paul Lussier *Screenplay* James Duff *Lead Actors* James B. Sikking, Bibi Besch, William McNamara, Lori Loughlin *88 minutes*
★ Earnest but well-handled domestic drama. Tensions mount when an abandoned wedding forces Sikking to realise that his middle-class family

isn't perfect after all. *Thirtysomething* actor Ken Olin directs with an insider's eye.

Fatal Love

Odyssey ODY 329

USA 1992

Certificate 15 *Director* Tom McLoughlin *Producers* Joan Barnett, Jack Grossbart *Screenplay* Deborah Joy LeVine *Lead Actors* Molly Ringwald, Lee Grant, Martin Landau, Perry King *94 minutes*
Sober TV movie bio-pic of the late Alison Gertz, a woman who contracted Aids from a one-night stand and later lectured about her experiences. Ringwald displays dedication as Gertz.

The Flash 3: Deadly Nightshade

Warner PEV 12516

USA 1991

Certificate PG *Director* Bruce Bilson *Producer* Gail Morgan Hickman *Screenplay* John Francis Moore, Howard Chaykin *Lead Actors* John Wesley Shipp, Amanda Pays, Alex Desert, Richard Belzer *88 minutes*
Speedy crime fighter Flash teams up with Nightshade to combat a superhero imposter. Comic strip-style fun for older children.

Guncrazy

Medusa MO 386

USA 1992

Certificate 15 *Director* Tamra Davis *Producers* Zane W. Levitt, Diane Firestone *Screenplay* Matthew Bright *Lead Actors* Drew Barrymore, James LeGros, Joe Dallesandro, Michael Ironside *90 minutes*
★ Bored teenager Barrymore seeks solace by writing to a prisoner, but after his release their mutual passion for guns and each other leads to trouble. Derivative but not entirely negligible exercise in Bible-haunted Southern Gothic.

Into the Sun

First Independent VA20169

USA 1991

Certificate 15 *Director* Fritz Kiersch *Producers* Kevin M. Kallberg, Oliver G. Hess *Screenplay* John Brancato, Michael Ferris *Lead Actors* Michael Pare, Anthony Michael Hall, Deborah Maria Moore, Terry Kiser *97 minutes*
While researching a role for a new movie, a star and his air force handler are captured by the enemy. The comedy sits awkwardly with the racism in this flyboy take on *The Hard Way*.

Keeping Secrets

CIC Video VHA 1587

USA 1991

Certificate PG *Director* John Korty *Producers* Pat Finnegan, Sheldon Pinchuk *Screenplay* Edmond Stevens, based on the book by Suzanne Somers *Lead Actors* Suzanne Somers, Ken Kercheval, Michael Learned, Kim Zimmer *89 minutes*
True-story TV movie. Somers plays herself in this chronicle of her own turbulent upbringing with a trio of alcoholics in the family.

Knockouts

20.20 Vision NVT 16892

USA 1992

Certificate 18 *Director* John Bowen *Producers* Tom Berman, Ron Lavery *Screenplay* Danny King *Lead Actors* Brad Zutaout, Tally, Sindi Rome, Chona Jason *90 minutes*
Five impecunious female students raise their tuition fees with a variety of clothes-shedding ruses.

Lower Level

CIC Video VHB 2611

USA 1991

Certificate 15 *Director* Kristine Peterson *Producers* W. K. Border, Michael Leahy *Screenplay* Joel Soisson *Lead Actors* David Bradley, Elizabeth Gracen, Jeff Yagher, Shari Shattuck *85 minutes*
A successful architect and her yuppie boyfriend find themselves locked in an office block after hours with a deranged security guard.

Miracle in the Wilderness

First Independent VA 20166

USA 1991

Certificate PG *Director* Kevin James Dobson *Producer* Wayne Morris *Screenplay* Michael Michaelian, Jim Byrnes, based on the novella by Paul Gallico *Lead Actors* Kris Kristofferson, Kim Cattrall, John Dennis Johnston, Davi Oliver *85 minutes*
This cable movie starts off as an engaging kidnap Western but becomes lost when Kristofferson's cavalryman-turned-rancher and his God-fearing spouse start bible-bashing.

Payoff

Medusa MC 380

USA 1991

Certificate 15 *Director* Stuart Cooper *Producers* Andrew Sugerman, William Stuart *Screenplay* David Weisberg, Douglas S. Cook, based on the novel *The Payoff* by Ronald T. Owen *Lead Actors* Keith Carradine, Kim Greist, Harry Dean Stanton, John Saxon *106 minutes*
Carradine's revengeful plan to rob a mafioso's casino takes him in an unexpected direction when he falls in love with Greist's enigmatic croupier. Passable assembly of favourite noir elements.

Psychic

High Fliers HFV 8216

USA 1991

Certificate 18 *Director* George Mihalka *Producer* Tom Berry *Screenplay* Miguel Tejada-Flores, Paul Koval *Lead Actors* Zach Galligan, Catherine Mary Stewart, Michael Nouri, Albert Shultz *88 minutes*
A college student's terrifying visions of a murder turn out to be alarmingly prescient, but he brings suspicion on himself when he goes to the police. Standard tale boosted by the odd arresting visual flourish.

Quicksand: No Escape

CIC Video VHA 1592

USA 1991

Certificate PG *Director* Michael

Pressman *Producers/Screenplay* Peter Baloff, Dave Wollert *Lead Actors* Donald Sutherland, Tim Matheson, John Acovone, Timothy Carhart *89 minutes*

★ An architect is blackmailed by a seedy private investigator (Sutherland) in return for not revealing his possible implication in a vice cop's death. Small-scale, vividly characterised variation on the *Strangers on a Train* criminal exchange scenario. A treat.

The Return of Eliot Ness

Braveworld BRV 10142

USA 1990

Certificate 15 *Director* James Contner *Producer* Joseph B. Wallenstein *Screenplay* Michael Petryni *Lead Actors* Robert Stack, Jack Coleman, Philip Bosco, Charles Durning *91 minutes*
Ness returns to put the clamps on the Mob's internecine power struggles. Dreary TV gangland fare.

Scanner Force (aka Scanners 3: The Takeover)

First Independent VA 20171

Canada 1991

Certificate 18 *Director* Christian Duguay *Producer* Rene Malo *Screenplay* B. J. Nelson, Julie Richard, David Preston *Lead Actors* Liliana Komorowska, Steve Parrish, Valerie Valois, Daniel Pilon *97 minutes*
An untested new treatment causes telekinetic 'scanner' Helen Monet to develop megalomaniac tendencies. Daft sequel without the intelligence of Cronenberg's original but a good deal of gusto in the set-pieces.

The Super

Foxvideo Movie Premiere 1872

USA 1991

Certificate 15 *Director* Rod Daniel *Producer* Charles Gordon *Screenplay* Sam Simon *Lead Actors* Joe Pesci, Vincent Gardenia, Madolyn Smith Osborne, Ruben Blades *85 minutes*
★ A slum landlord realises the error of his ways when the courts order him to stay in one of his own apartment blocks. With sardonic wit and hyperkinetic aggression, Pesci breathes life into unpromising material.

Tiger Claws

20.20 Vision NVT 16898

USA 1991

Certificate 15 *Director* Kelly Makin *Producer* Jalal Merhi *Screenplay* J. Stephen Maunder *Lead Actors* Jalal Merhi, Cynthia Rothrock, Bolo Yeung *88 minutes*
Undercover cops infiltrate the New York martial arts community to collar a killer. Rothrock and Merhi are as nifty as ever, but the exposition and supporting players leave a lot to be desired.

To Kill For

High Fliers HFV 8215

USA 1991

Certificate 18 *Director* John Dirlam *Producer* Stacy Codikow *Screenplay* George D. Putnam *Lead Actors* Michael Madsen, Laura Johnson, Tony Hamilton,

Tommy Redmond Hicks 92 minutes
Investigating a fatal motel shooting,
Detective Cliff Burden falls for its
glamorous owner.

The Unnamable Returns

New Age/Columbia TriStar CVT 16967
USA 1992

Certificate 18 Director/Producer/Screenplay
Jean Paul Ouellette *Lead Actors* Mark
Kinsey Stephenson, John Rhys Davies,
Julie Strain, David Warner 92 minutes
More care than usual has been taken
with this sprightly monster opus.
Two occult experts venture beneath
a local graveyard to unearth
an ancient demon.

XTRO II: The Second Encounter

First Independent VA 20165
USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director Harry Bromley
Davenport *Producers* Lloyd A. Simandl,
John A. Curtis *Screenplay* John A.
Curtis *Lead Actors* Jan-Michael Vincent,
Paul Koslo, Tara Buckman,
Janno Frandsen 90 minutes
An alien menaces scientists at a top-
secret installation in this sequel to a
copycat original. It's *Alien* on a fraction
of the budget and less inspiration.

Retail

The Addams Family

Columbia TriStar CVR 22810
USA 1991 Price £12.99

Certificate PG Director Barry Sonnenfeld
★ Unusually sophisticated knockabout
comedy, which succeeds in combining
the quiet and lugubrious subtlety of
Charles Addams' cartoons with an
array of glossy sets. (S&S January 1992)



Christopher Lloyd, Anjelica Huston

American Friends

Vision Video VVD 1081
UK 1991 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director Tristram Powell
A shy Oxford academic (Michael Palin)
abandons his Victorian bachelor
life style for a young American girl.
A well-mannered and elegant period
piece. (MFB No. 687)

Basil the Great Mouse Detective (The Great Mouse Detective)

Disney D213602
USA 1986 Price £13.99

Certificate U Directors John Musker,
Ron Clements, Dave Michener,
Burny Mattinson
A mouse battles with an evil rat
professor in Victorian London. A lively
full-length animated feature which
never strays too far from the spirit of
Conan Doyle. (MFB No. 633)

The Best Intentions (Den Goda Viljan)

Artificial Eye ART 045
Sweden 1991 Price £15.99

Certificate 15 Director Bille August
★ This is an Ingmar Bergman film in
all but name – written and inspired
by him, and directed under his aegis.
The subject is the meeting and
marriage of Bergman's own parents.
(S&S July 1992) *Subtitles*

Big Wednesday

Tartan Video BDV 11182
(Laser Disc TVL 009)
USA 1978 Price £15.99

Certificate PG Director John Milius
Three adolescent buddies experience
three great obsessions of 60s
California – surfing, sex and Saigon.
(MFB No. 544) *Widescreen*

The Black Hole

Disney D200112
USA 1979 Price £10.99

Certificate U Director Gary Nelson
Early, failed attempt to apply state-
of-the-art special effects to the more
nebulous areas of astrophysical
theory, and somehow come up with
a film. The result is a *Star Trek* script
without the humour. (MFB No. 553)

The Bonfire of the Vanities

Warner Home Video PES 12048
USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Brian De Palma
★ Unfairly maligned screen version
of Tom Wolfe's celebrated novel.
Tom Hanks is dragged down by his
scheming mistress (Melanie Griffith)
and a drunken journalist (Bruce
Willis). (S&S May 1991)

Boyz n the Hood

Columbia TriStar CVR 23188
USA 1991 Price £10.00

Certificate 15 Director John Singleton
Highly praised first feature which
deals sympathetically with gangland
life in LA. Irreproachably hip, but the
film's do-the-right-thing sincerity
seems dated. (S&S November 1991)

The Bridge on the River Kwai

Columbia TriStar CVR 30001
UK 1957 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director David Lean
A veteran campaigner, with an all-star
cast – Alec Guinness, Jack Hawkins,
William Holden – sweating it out
under a burning sky and the
booths of the Japanese.
(MFB No. 286) *Widescreen version*

Caravaggio

Connoisseur CR 084
UK 1986 Price £14.99

Certificate 18 Director Derek Jarman
★ Sketches from the life and death
of the 16th century Italian painter,
artfully framed and theatrically
staged by Jarman.

Christ Stopped at Eboli (Cristo si fermato a Eboli)

Artificial Eye ART 044
Italy/France 1979 Price £22.49

Certificate PG Director Francesco Rosi
★ Carlo Levi's autobiographical novel
of poverty and ignorance in the Italian

midi. In this original four-hour version
of Rosi's film, Gian Maria Volonté
plays an intellectual who becomes
a doctor in the village to which
the Fascists have exiled him.
(MFB No. 581) *Subtitles*

Cinderella

Walt Disney Classics D204102
USA 1949 Price £14.99

Certificate U Directors Wilfred Jackson,
Hamilton Luske, Clyde Geronimi
Limited edition release of a not
particularly classic Disney fairy-tale.
(MFB No. 205)

Deathstalker 4: Match of the Titans

Braveworld STV 2138
USA 1989 Price £10.99

Certificate 18 Director Howard R. Cohen
A sword-and-sorcery tournament is
disrupted by an evil enchantress who
turns men to stone. (S&S November
1991, video rental premiere)

Drop Dead Fred

Columbia TriStar CVR 23772
USA 1991 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Ate de Jong
Ill-advised attempt to export toilet
humour and Rik Mayall to the US.
Unhappy adult Phoebe Cates regresses
to childhood, reviving an imaginary
'friend'. (S&S November 1991)

Edward Scissorhands

Foxvideo 1867
USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director Tim Burton
★ Burton's neatly conceived film
owes much of its atmosphere to
screenwriter Caroline Thompson.
In an inside-out horror story, Johnny
Depp stars as the Beast with garden
shears for hands. (S&S July 1991)

The Fisher King

Columbia TriStar CVR 22490
USA 1991 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Terry Gilliam
In Gilliam's fairy-tale of New York,
all sinners deserve forgiveness,
even phone-in radio DJs (Jeff Bridges)
and insanely cheerful tramps (Robin
Williams). (S&S November 1991)

F/X2 – The Deadly Art of Illusion

Columbia TriStar CVR 22862
USA 1991 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Richard Franklin
Brian Dennehy and Bryan Brown
team up for a tired sequel animated
only by a robot clown called Bluey.
(S&S November 1991)

Glory

Columbia TriStar CVR 31573
USA 1989 Price £12.99

Certificate 15 Director Edward Zwick
Strange story of a regiment of black
troops raised under the Union flag,
for propaganda purposes, in the
American Civil War.
(MFB No. 675) *Widescreen*

Graveyard Shift

Columbia TriStar CVR 22854
USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 18 Director Ralph S. Singleton
Forgettable addition to the Stephen

King film library, about a rat
exterminator who finds strange
things under the floor of the local
mill factory. (S&S June 1991)

Green Card

Buena Vista D411412
USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Peter Weir
★ Gérard Depardieu weds Andie
MacDowell so that he can stay on
in New York, and she can move
into a 'marrieds-only' garden
flat. Fine scripting and a notable
double-act. (MFB No. 686)

Highlander II – The Quickening

EV EVS 1072
USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Russell Mulcahy
Tatty futurist trappings do nothing
to improve this dreadfully plotted
sequel, with Sean Connery and
Christopher Lambert. (S&S June 1991)

Homer & Eddie

Vision Video VVD 1109
USA 1989 Price £10.99

Certificate 15
Director Andrei Konchalovsky
Whimsical road movie in which an
amiable fellow with brain damage
hooks up with an escaped mental
patient on the run. With James
Belushi and Whoopi Goldberg.
(S&S December 1991)

Honeysuckle Rose

Tartan Video BDV 1043
USA 1980 Price £15.99

Certificate PG Director Jerry Schatzberg
The career of a Country & Western star
(Willie Nelson) is given the usual
screen treatment. Dyan Cannon,
Slim Pickens and Amy Irving make up
the chorus. (MFB No. 561) *Widescreen*

Laurel & Hardy Shorts

Busy Bodies, Midnight Patrol and The Chimp
Vision Video HRO 055
USA 1932-1933 Price £10.99

Certificate U
Directors Lloyd French, James Parrott
Three more shorts to join the
voluminous Hal Roach collection –
Stan and Ollie show their
incompetence as carpenters,
as policemen and as circus artists.
(MFB Nos. 158/149)

The Left-Handed Gun

Tartan Video BDV 11067
(Laser Disc TVL 013)
USA 1958 Price £15.99

Certificate PG Director Arthur Penn
★ Thoughtful and ambitious version
of the life of Billy the Kid, with an
enthralled central performance by
the young and moody Paul Newman.
B/W (MFB No. 297) *Widescreen*

Mortal Thoughts

Columbia TriStar CVR 22593
USA 1991 Price £10.99

Certificate 18 Director Alan Rudolph
A beautiful woman (Demi Moore) tells
a detective several versions of how her
best friend's husband (Bruce Willis)
ended up dead. Classy treatment of
a poor script. (S&S November 1991)



Through a glass darkly: Paul Newman in 'The Left-Handed Gun'

Navy Seals
Vision Video VVD 1062
USA 1990 Price £10.99
Certificate 15 Director Lewis Teague
A unit of commandos rampages across the Middle East in pursuit of fanatical Arab terrorists. With Charlie Sheen and Michael Biehn. (S&S July 1991)
New Jack City
Warner Home Video PES 12073
USA 1991 Price £10.99
Certificate 18 Director Mario Van Peebles
High-gloss drug-traffic melodrama, with memorable performances from Ice-T and Judd Nelson as vigilante law officers and from Wesley Snipes as the gangster. (S&S September 1991)
Nighthawks
Connoisseur CR 083
UK 1978 Price £14.99
Certificate 18 Director Ron Peck
Dour and desperately serious depiction of a gay schoolteacher whose life is split between classroom probity by day and club-life cruising by night. (MFB No 541)
Not Without My Daughter
MGM/UA PES 54237
USA 1990 Price £10.99
Certificate 15 Director Brian Gilbert
Unpleasantly xenophobic tale of an American woman (Sally Field) trying to escape her fundamentalist husband (Alfred Molina) in Iran. (S&S July 1991)
Platoon
Columbia TriStar CVR 31107
USA 1986 Price £10.99
Certificate 18 Director Oliver Stone
Charlie Sheen in another war film, a relentlessly belligerent appraisal of the horrors of Vietnam. (MFB No. 639) <i>Widescreen</i>
Predator 2
FoxVideo 1853
USA 1990 Price £10.99
Certificate 18 Director Stephen Hopkins
★ Kevin Peter Hall returns as the

alien. A new cast (Danny Glover, Gary Busey, Ruben Blades) line up as targets. Fine sets from Laurence G. Paull of <i>Blade Runner</i> fame. (S&S May 1991)
Proof
Artificial Eye ART 043
Australia 1991 Price £15.99
Certificate 15
Director Jocelyn Moorhouse
Sly, ambiguous film about a blind man (Hugo Weaving) who doubts all that he hears about the visual world. The comedy – if it is that – is exceptionally cruel. (S&S December 1991)
Reflections in a Golden Eye
Tartan BDV 11057 (Laser Disc TVL 008)
USA 1967 Price £15.99
Certificate 15 Director John Huston
★ Wilfully perverse adaptation of a Carson McCullers novella. Marlon Brando, Elizabeth Taylor and Brian Keith explore their sexual identities in the summer's heat of an army camp. (MFB No.415) <i>Widescreen version</i>
The Rocketeer
Buena Vista D441052
USA 1991 Price £10.99
Certificate PG Director Joe Johnston
A test-pilot hero with a rocket-powered backpack battles against an evil Nazi spy-cum-Hollywood film star. (S&S August 1991)
Scorsese x 4
Connoisseur CR 083
USA 1963-1974 Price £14.99
Certificate 15 Director Martin Scorsese
★ Four early shorts by Scorsese: <i>What's a Nice Girl Like You Doing in a Place Like This?</i> , <i>It's Not Just You, Murray!</i> , <i>The Big Shave</i> and <i>Italianamerican</i> . Interesting as a look into the influences behind Scorsese's later work. (S&S June 1992) <i>B/W & Colour</i>
Seven Minutes
Braveworld STV 2141
USA 1989 Price £10.99
Certificate 15

Director Klaus Maria Brandauer
A reclusive clockmaker (Brandauer) plans to assassinate Hitler in a Munich beer hall. You know he's going to fail, but that doesn't hurt the suspense. (S&S June 1991, video rental premiere)
Shattered
Columbia TriStar CVR 23214
USA 1991 Price £10.99
Certificate 15
Director Wolfgang Petersen
Personal identity problems face amnesiac crash victim Tom Berenger, who can't remember if Greta Scacchi is his wife, or whether she has just tried to kill him. (S&S November 1991)
Swoon
Connoisseur CR 082
USA 1991 Price £14.99
Certificate 18 Director Tom Kalin
★ Sharp feature debut by Kalin, based on the case of two teenage gay Jewish boys in the 20s whose kidnapping of a neighbour's child turned to murder. Their story also inspired Hitchcock's <i>Rope</i> . (S&S September 1992) <i>B/W</i>
Tales from the Darkside: The Movie
Columbia TriStar CVR 22608
USA 1991 Price £10.99
Certificate 18 Director John Harrison
Three unoriginal but fitfully entertaining short stories, with the usual horror-box assortment of dark secrets, walking mummies and black cats. (S&S February 1992)
Terminator 2: Judgment Day
Guild GLD 51162
USA 1991 Price £12.99
Certificate 15 Director James Cameron
★ Arnie Schwarzenegger returns as the indestructible robot, this time on the side of good. A triumph of good-humoured, well-oiled, steamroller cinema. (S&S September 1991)
Truly, Madly, Deeply
Buena Vista D613532
UK 1990 Price £12.99
Certificate PG Director Anthony Minghella
Depressed musician Juliet Stevenson mourns lost lover Alan Rickman, but his mystical resurrection causes more problems than it solves. (S&S October 1991)
White Fang
Disney
USA 1990 Price £10.99
Certificate U Director Randal Kleiser
Adventures in the Yukon of a young boy and a cross-bred dog-wolf. The Disney nature-trail treatment stays true to Jack London's frontier sentimentality. (S&S June 1991)
Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy
Braveworld STV 2156
USA 1990 Price £10.99
Certificate PG Director Steven Gethers

Producers Louis Rudolph
Screenplay Steven Gethers
Lead Actors Jaclyn Smith, James Franciscus, Rod Taylor, Stephen Elliott
149 minutes The JFK story is given the full soap treatment. Ex- <i>Charlie's Angel</i> Jaclyn Smith does a Barbie doll impersonation of Mrs Kennedy/Onassis.
Ruby and Oswald (Four Days in Dallas)
Odyssey ODY 108
USA 1978/1981 Price £10.99
Certificate PG Director Mel Stuart
Producer Paul Freeman
Screenplay John McGreevey, Michael McGreevey
Lead Actors Frederic Forrest, Michael Lerner, Doris Roberts, Lou Frizzell, Gordon Jump
90 minutes Shortened version of a CBS TV drama, full of interpolated documentary clips – some shocking and some tasteless. Oswald (Forrest) is painted as a crypto-communist, and Ruby (Lerner) as a crazed patriot.
Retail collections
The Chaplin Collection:
The Kid/The Idle Class
USA 1921/22 <i>B/W Silent</i>
City Lights
USA 1931 <i>B/W Silent</i>
Modern Times
USA 1936 <i>B/W</i>
The Great Dictator
USA 1940 <i>B/W</i>
FoxVideo 3002/3006/3007/3008
Price £10.99 each <i>Certificate U</i>
Director Charles Chaplin
★ Four features and a short which wrap up everything one might wish to know about Chaplin. Whether the scene is a slum pavement (<i>The Kid</i> , <i>City Lights</i>), a factory conveyor belt (<i>Modern Times</i>) or the Nuremberg rally (<i>The Great Dictator</i>), the subject is always the same – little men fighting bullies, with orphans, waifs and flower girls looking on. (MFB Nos. 203/26/84)
Wayward Girls & Wicked Women
Volume 1: <i>Directors</i> Erica Russell, Caroline Leaf, Candy Guard, Emma Calder, Emily Hubley, Nina Shorina, Gillian Lacey, Marjut Rimminen, Nicole van Goethem, Alison Snowden
Volume 2: <i>Directors</i> Candy Guard, Nina Shorina, Marjut Rimminen, Christine Roche, Emily Hubley, Karen Watson, Sarah Pucill, Nicole van Goethem, Caroline Leaf, Veronica Soul, Joanna Quinn
Volume 3: <i>Directors</i> Suzan Pitt, Joanna Woodward, Vera Neubauer
Connoisseur Video CR089/CR090/CR091
UK 1992 Price £14.99 each <i>Certificate 15</i>
Three volumes of animation films made by women over the last ten years, from Nicole van Goethem's Oscar-winning and hilarious <i>Greek Tragedy</i> through Suzan Pitt's sexy <i>Asparagus</i> to Joanna Quinn's <i>Girls' Night Out</i> . (See reviews in this issue)

Retail premiere
Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy
Braveworld STV 2156
USA 1990 Price £10.99
Certificate PG Director Steven Gethers

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Letters are welcome, and should be addressed to the Editor at Sight and Sound, British Film Institute, 21 Stephen Street, London W1P 1PL. Facsimile 071 436 2327

A cut too far

From Brad Stevens

I would like to comment on a number of unrelated items in the October issue of *Sight and Sound*.

I would firstly like to offer some information to reinforce Richard Combs' suggestion, in his interesting piece on Clint Eastwood, that Eastwood is "an actor whose speciality is not being there". When Eastwood was interviewed by Barry Norman from Cannes in 1988, he was asked if he was superstitious about *Bird* being his thirteenth film, and replied that he was not because he had already directed three films without any credit. This would seem to be an area that admirers of Eastwood would be well advised to investigate, perhaps paying particular attention to *Tightrope*, a film which is very much in the Eastwood style and whose credited director, Richard Tuggle, has subsequently made only one film, a bland, would-be Hitchcockian thriller called *Out of Bounds* that bears no resemblance to *Tightrope* whatsoever (apart from the fact that its opening sequence is set in New Orleans).

I would also like to mention that the version of *Othello* which Jonathan Rosenbaum claims was preferred by Welles, featuring spoken credits but no narration, was screened by BBC2 in their 1982 Welles season. It has not been repeated, but clips from this version, including part of the credit sequence, are included in Alan Yentob's often-shown *Arena* documentary *The Orson Welles Story*. One can only regard ironically the fact that the Welles films now being chosen for restoration are precisely those least in need of the restorer's attentions. Wouldn't the time, money and energy being spent on restoring *Othello* and *Chimes at Midnight* be more usefully spent making available the longer version of *Mr Arkadin*, which was released on video in America, or *Filming Othello*, which has never been shown in Britain? And what has happened to the promised Peter Bogdanovich/Frank Marshall restoration of *The Other Side of the Wind*?

Finally, I would like to warn potential purchasers about the Aikman Archive video of Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, described in *Sight and Sound*'s video section as "the longest surviving version of Lang's epic". I already owned a copy of the EMI video of this film (taken from a BFI print, running 90 minutes) as well as Giorgio Moroder's 83 minute version, but decided to buy a copy of the Aikman video because the running time of 139 minutes led me to expect that it would include the various scenes (totalling about 5 minutes) added to Moroder's re-edited and tinted version, and a great deal more besides.

A close examination, however, revealed that not only did this version not contain anything not included in the EMI tape, but that it had been heavily cut; although no entire scenes are missing, practically every scene in the film has been shortened, and the famous 'Tower of Babel' sequence has been almost completely removed. Needless to say, none of the sequences restored to the Moroder version (for instance the glimpse of the sports stadium which follows the



Played at a slower rate?
Fritz Lang's 'Metropolis'

opening shots of the workers returning to the underground city) is included. The extravagant running time is achieved by projecting the print at (I would guess) almost half the speed used by EMI for their version. The Aikman tape does, however, have the distinction of a score which manages the very considerable feat of being even worse than Moroder's (the composer of the Aikman score has remained sensibly anonymous, though there are no credits at all on this print). Indeed Moroder's version, which, despite re-editing, includes most of the footage deleted from Aikman's, is currently the best version available, particularly since the video can be easily improved by turning down both sound and colour on the television.

Luton

Jeff Aikman, owner of The Aikman Archive, replies: Hours of work go into the restoration and preparation of each film released by the Aikman Archive, so it is indeed a shame that Mr Stevens was dissatisfied with the video version of *Metropolis*.

The videotape master was prepared from the original negative used in the US from the initial release. We are in possession of the original 35mm negative, and any subsequent internegatives of prints were struck from this negative, so a better negative should not be in existence. A state-of-the-art Rank Cintel Digiscan machine was used for making the transfer to video.

The comment about the film running slowly is unjustified, as the film was transferred at the exact speed at which it was filmed (18 frames per second). It could be that the other prints Mr Stevens has seen were at a faster rate than Lang intended.

I can truthfully say that we have sold thousands of videocassette units on this title throughout the world and this is the first complaint I have heard.

Ray's history

From Chandak Sengoopta

I agree with Ashish Rajadhyaksha (S&S August) that western critics have reduced Satyajit Ray's complex body of work to stereotypical notions of a 'Ray film': lyrical, universal, and 'humanistic'. Rajadhyaksha's article, however, contributes its own oversimplifications and distortions. Here are three examples.

First, Rajadhyaksha insinuates that Ray was disingenuous in his frequent statements that his films were made for a Bengali audience. This is a ludicrous suggestion. With the exception of two films, all of Ray's work was primarily but not exclusively meant for Bengalis. Ray was always happy when his films were seen outside Bengal, but he never made his films for non-Bengali audiences. The universal meaning of his films grows out of their uncompromising particularism. Rajadhyaksha's simplistic dichotomy of nativism versus internationalism cannot accommodate this variety of cosmopolitanism which is essentially Tagorean.

Second, Rajadhyaksha states that with the declaration of Indira Gandhi's State of Emergency in 1975, Ray stopped making contemporary films until 1989. Actually, Ray's most openly anti-Indira film was *The Middleman*, released in 1976, and made well after the imposition of the Emergency. In 1981, Ray made *Pikoo* and *Deliverance*, both

set in the present, and angry films in their own way. He was all set to make a series of films on rural poverty and exploitation after *The Home and the World* (1984) but was prevented by his serious illness. These facts are all available in Andrew Robinson's biography, which Rajadhyaksha cites but obviously has not read.

Third, Rajadhyaksha claims that Ray was initially not averse to the traditional 'melodramatic' genres of Indian cinema and mentions *The Philosopher's Stone* and *Kanchenjunga* in support of his contention. Ray was never a naive realist and most of his films made moral statements. But these do not enable one to equate him with K. A. Abbas or V. Shantaram. What about Ray's dramaturgy? Or his aesthetics? Does the 'Renoir/De Sica persona' seem all that fictitious when they are taken into account?

These instances should be enough to question Rajadhyaksha's credentials. Satyajit Ray's films are deceptively simple. It takes more knowledge and perception to appreciate their depths, nuances, and contexts than Rajadhyaksha seems to possess. Maryland, US

Moral minorities

From Briony Hanson

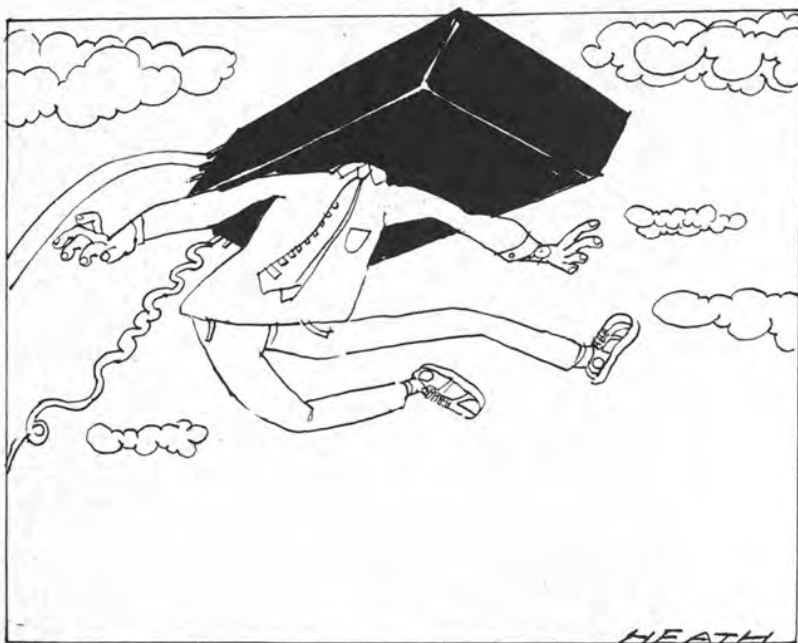
Has *Sight & Sound* decided to invent a correspondent who makes claims so outrageous that people like me (who would never dream of responding to a letters page) are forced to pen a horrified reply? I refer, of course, to William Phillips (S&S October), who chose to "ventilate" his unease at the BFI's current direction in promoting and encouraging work of minority interest. Let's hope, Mr Phillips, that you don't actually exist. But if you do, then I must point out that despite your worthy sixteen years of membership, you have quite blindingly missed the whole point of the BFI.

The BFI exists to promote British film production, education, and an appreciation and understanding of the depth and breadth of world cinema. It must necessarily fulfil its aims by providing exhibition and production opportunities for those voices which would not otherwise be heard, i.e., which are not already frequently represented by commercial/mainstream cinema. Therefore, while "95 per cent" of the population may well be "white", and - excuse me while I sniff at your statistics - "97 per cent" heterosexual, you have no business to be peeved at the supposed imbalance of representation by the BFI. This is due to the fact that 99.9 per cent of all the other movies which ever appear in Britain (i.e. those not funded or exhibited by the BFI) cover quite adequately all those nice white heterosexual issues and concerns.

Despite all this, I think that your bigotry has got in the way of the real point that you wanted to make; that you feel that the BFI Production Board has not actually come up with any worthwhile film productions during the past decade. Now this would be a whole different argument and one which you might be perfectly justified in "ventilating" should you so wish. Until such time, please don't try to comment on areas of British life about which you know nothing. Britain to you, Mr Phillips, may well be a "calm, kindly and tolerant" place. Let me hazard a guess - you're neither black nor gay? Am I right? You bet I am.

Newcastle Upon Tyne

Shadow boxer



Benjamin Woolley

They call it the 'Reality Engine'. It is a box, about the size of a desk-side filing cabinet. Its only surface features are a few slots, switches and sockets on the back; otherwise, there is nothing to hint at the awesome capabilities implied by its name. The action takes place on the inside: this machine's circuitry, its makers claim, is capable of processing 550,000 textured triangles and more than 320 million pixels per second. Not just that, but it can handle shadow generation, projected textures, motion blur and warping.

It may seem a strange concept of reality that reduces it to so many thousand triangles, so many million points of light, so much shadow, texture, blur and warp. But when it comes to computer simulation, that is what reality is reduced to: a world of shapes and surfaces. The chair I am now seated upon is just a configuration of cubes with some dimpling on the squab and grain in the arms.

Real-time realism

What makes the Reality Engine worth its hefty \$100,000-plus price tag is its power to

reproduce these shapes and surfaces in 'real time'. In, for example, a flight simulator, the terrain viewed by the pilot through the cockpit has to be generated by the computer in response to the pilot's manipulation of the controls. When the joystick is drawn back, the computer has to be able to create each new image that will be seen through the cockpit window as the nose of the 'plane' lifts: the horizon falling away, the clouds moving into view. This is what 'real time' means, and achieving it with any degree of realism has until now required a purpose-built graphics supercomputer.

The most computationally demanding aspect of real-time realism is applying the texture to the objects in the scene, the ground, the trees, the sky. The models generated by a computer are mathematical forms: perfect spheres, exact cubes. Texture is a surface that turns these pure geometries into the bumpy, lumpy shapes that surround us: a brick texture applied to a cube can turn it into a house, a leafy texture applied to a cone can turn it into a neatly trimmed bush. By wiring the routines that perform this texturing process into the Reality Engine's hardware, the system's manufacturers, Silicon Graphics, claim that

'The producers of Steven Spielberg's \$100 million "Jurassic Park" are known to have turned to computers, rather than to more conventional methods of stop-frame animation, to create its reptile cast'

they have created a general-purpose machine that allows people to "walk through a molecule, animate complex shapes, or explore the surface of a distant planet - all in three dimensions, in full colour and in real time".

Challenging the camera

One of the main markets that Silicon Graphics is aiming to attract with the Reality Engine is the film and television industry. Traditionally, directors have been sceptical of the computer, reluctant to use it to generate anything other than explicitly computer images for features that have technology as a dominant theme. One of the reasons for this scepticism seems to be a fear of losing creative control. Currently, computer graphics have to be generated in a series of complex, highly technical and, from the cinematic point of view, arbitrarily distinct tasks. A geometric 'model' needs to be created which specifies the shapes in the scene, texture 'maps' have to be applied to these models to determine their appearance, and the resulting information 'rendered' to produce the finished image. Rendering up a 'photorealistic' scene can take hours, even days, making the end result something the director can only change at huge expense. This means that he or she effectively has to work blind, relying on the vision of technical staff who, unlike cameramen or set designers, are likely to have none of the film-maker's tradecraft that comes from years of experience in the industry. According to Silicon Graphics, the Reality Engine and its like will overcome this problem. What the director can get is what he or she sees on the screen.

The producers of Steven Spielberg's \$100 million *Jurassic Park*, which calls for the creation of a prehistoric environment populated by dinosaurs, are known to have turned to computers, rather than to more conventional methods of stop-frame animation, to create its reptile cast. What hardware they will be using remains undisclosed; it is unlikely to be a Reality Engine, which has only just been launched. But the decision alone has confirmed in the minds of the Hollywood technical community that the days of scepticism are over, and that the computer is set to challenge the camera as a source of cinematic imagery.

PROFESSOR POTEMKIN'S COMPETITION

The correct answers to the September competition were: 1. Adam West; 2. Siegfried; 3. Arnold Schwarzenegger; 4. Linda Lee; 5. Anthony Quinn; 6. 'Seven Samurai'/'The Magnificent Seven'; 7. Medea; 8. Lancelot du Lac, Perceval; 9. Douglas Fairbanks; 10. Miles O'Keeffe. The five winners are: Miranda Greentree from Portsmouth, David Bickerton from Surrey, Linda Lee from Merseyside, Jeff Potter from Hampshire and Alan Pavelin from Chislehurst.

This month's competition is called

'This Sporting Life'; the winner will receive five videos: 'Nosferatu', 'The Wizard of Oz', 'The Blue Angel', 'Metropolis' and 'The Hunchback of Notre Dame'; second prize will be: 'Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow', 'M' and 'March of the Wooden Soldiers'; the runner-up will receive copies of 'Extase' and 'The Bat'. All these are released on the new Aikman Archive label from Simitar Entertainment, and are available to buy at £14.99 each.

1. In which film does Esther Williams

go swimming with Tom and Jerry?

2. Which Premier League football ground was the setting for a 1939 murder mystery?

3. What was the ecstasy of woodcarver Steiner?

4. Which French director began his showbiz career doing impressions of tennis players and boxers?

5. What is the supposed profession of Groucho in 'A Day at the Races'?

6. Which distinguished cinema director shot the official documentary for the

1964 Olympic Games?

7. In the village cricket match of 'Playing Away', who are the away side? 8. Lelouch's 'Edith et Marcel' recounts the real-life affair of a singer and a boxer. What were their surnames?

9. What improvised piece of sporting equipment helps the last astronaut make his escape in 'Dark Star'?

10. The character of baseball legend Shoeless Joe Jackson figures in 'Eight Men Out' and in 'Field of Dreams'. Name both the actors who play him.

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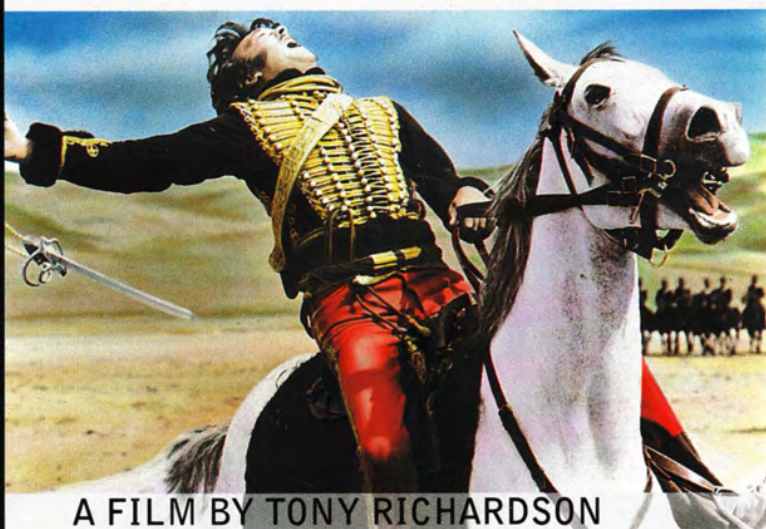
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